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CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

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PUBLISHERS
Roger Kean, Oliver Frey, Franco Frey

Editor
Graeme Kidd
Staff Writers
Tony Flanagan, Lloyd Mangram, Hannah Smith
Adventure Editor
Derek Brewster
Strategy Editor
Sean Masterson
Tech Tipster
Simon Goodwin
Contributing Writers
John Bates, Brendon Kavanagh, Rosetta McLeod, John Minson
Production Controller
David Western
Art Director
Dick Shiner
Illustrators
Ian Craig, Oliver Frey
Production
Gordon Druce, Tony Lorton, Cameron Pound, Jonathan Rignall, Matthew Uffindell

Advertisement Manager
Roger Bennett
Advertisement Assistant
Nick Wild
Subscriptions
Denise Roberts
Mail Order
Carol Kinsey

Editorial and production
1/2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1AQ
☎0584 5851
Mail Order and Subscriptions
PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB
☎0584 5620

ADVERTISING
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Cover by Oliver Frey with special thanks to the late + greatest FRANK HAMPSON

REGULARS

FEATURES

DIY

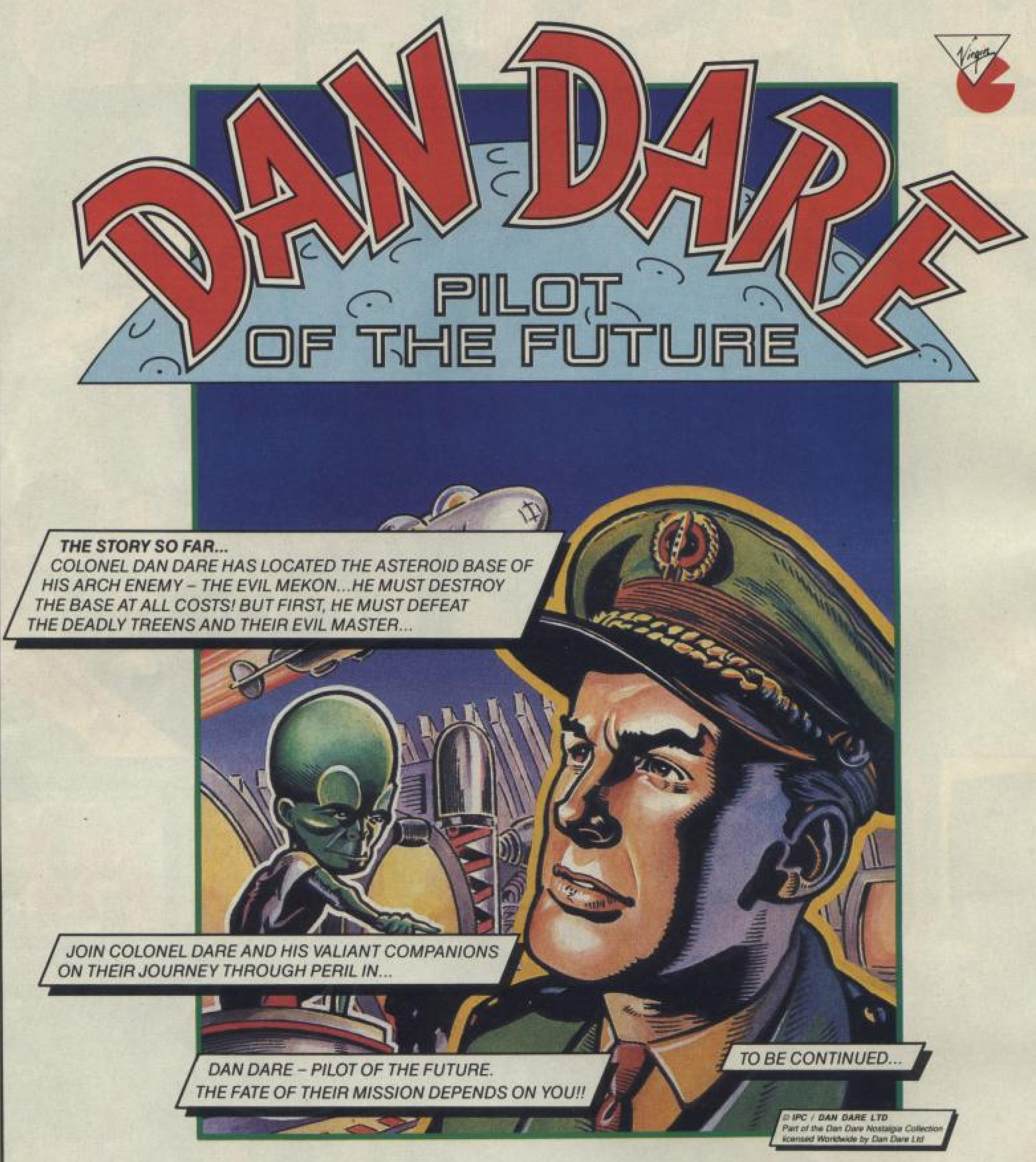
A whole lot more Libra people are going to be born next month. They won't be old enough to read the October CRASH, so whatever your starsign, beat the new Librans on 25th September!



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This year there have been a few 'minor' computer shows, mainly for single machines — the Amstrad and Commodore Shows — and of course several ZX Microfairs. The CES Show, intended to be a major home computer trade extravaganza was poorly attended by software houses, and home computer hardware manufacturers hardly made a showing. The general consensus of opinion was that everyone was saving up their effort (and show budgets) for the Personal Computer World Show which runs from September 3rd to 6th this year.

Considering that it's easy to spend £30,000 and more just on a stand at the PCW Show (and lots of companies plan to do at least that), it's not surprising that firms take the show very seriously indeed. This year — as our seven page preview section illustrates — there's an awful lot of interesting software due to make an appearance at Olympia. Several new labels, including PIRANHA and FASTER THAN LIGHT are using the show as a springboard into the Christmas marketplace, and of course we'll be there in force on the NEWSFIELD stand.

But there's not going to be a vast amount of exciting Spectrum add-ons unveiled at the show, by all accounts. The odd joystick or two will no doubt turn up, and of course the Spectrum Plus Two from AMSTRAD may well make its first public appearance. It seems the demand for Spectrum add-ons has largely been fulfilled. Perhaps once folks have got their basic requirements in the form of a joystick, interface and cassette recorder, they have all they need to play games and tend to leave it at that.

Mel Croucher, in partnership with Rod Cousens of QUICKSILVA and latterly, ACTIVISION fame, plan to reveal a very interesting black box at the show, however. SCORPIO INTERACTIVE has been working on a device that allows you to interface your computer with the pictures provided by an ordinary video recorder and then play a game in which you control computerised graphics moving over the video image. Several pop videos and a couple of films have already been given the SCORPIO treatment, and a demonstration of the possibilities should be running during the PCW Show. A neat idea, which has interesting possibilities — perhaps the most exciting innovation on the games/hardware front to be found at the show.

Only time and a good look round Olympia will tell. Maybe we'll see you on the Friday, Saturday or Sunday. Wednesday and Thursday are trade only days, folks. . . .



Graeme Kidd

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

A SLIGHT DIET . . .

Holiday time comes round again, and this month's CRASH has gone on a H-Plan diet! Staff hols, in combination with one or two other factors, have lead to a slightly slimmer issue this month — condensed rather than cut short. Lloyd has been a bit tied up with work on the new magazine mentioned last month, and handed over his MERELY MANGRAM pages to the team of wordsmiths in the CRASH office so that they could take a fairly comprehensive peek at the software offerings due at the PCW Show. Normal Service will be resumed with the October issue, as the team returns from sunning its knees in a variety of locations across the globe and gets back to some serious work, thoroughly revitalised by a summertime break.

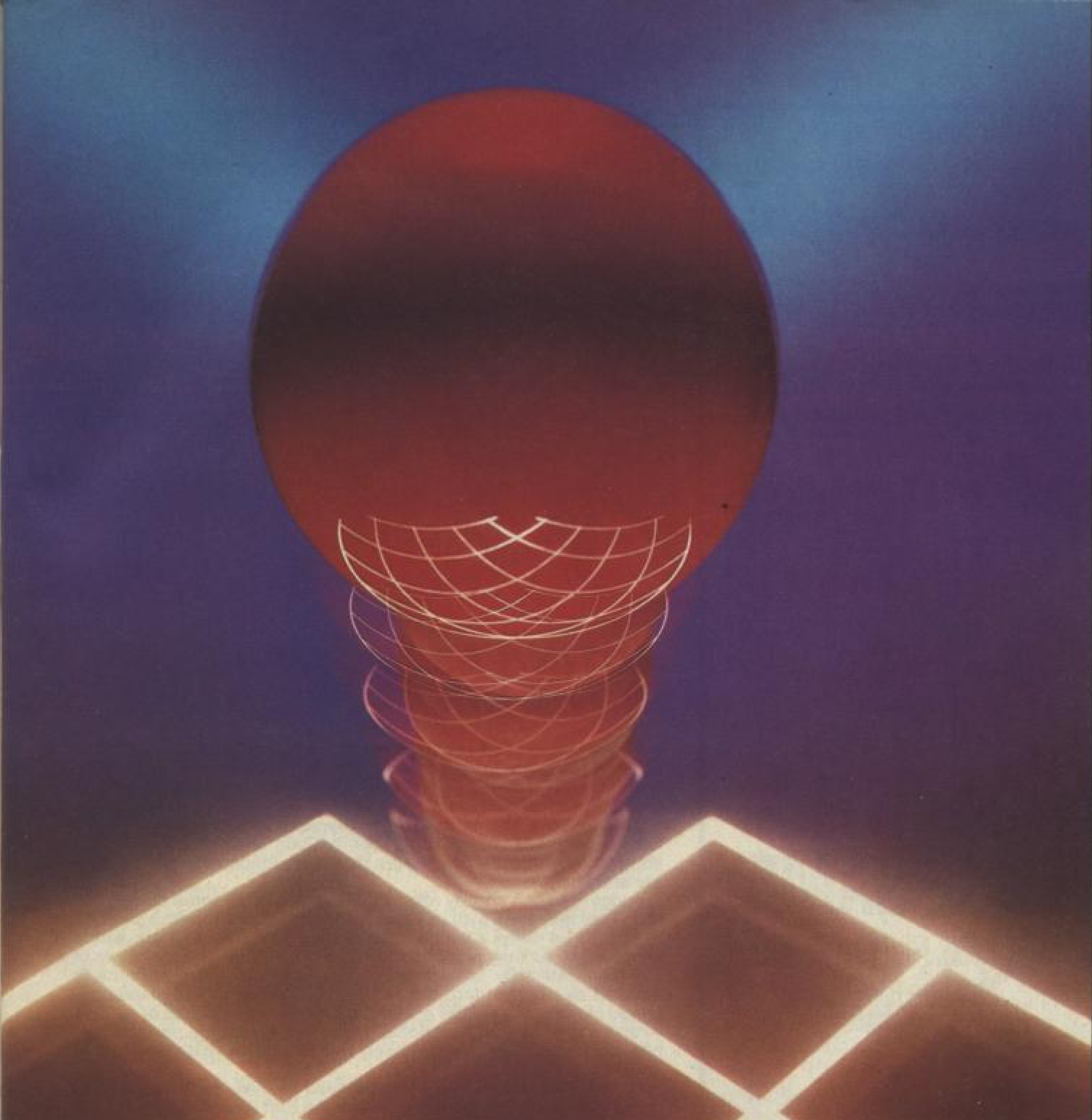
PROJECT GENESIS

Not one, but two winning game designs were selected by the team of GENESIS judges assembled in a Birmingham hotel room. After much deliberation, representatives from DESIGN DESIGN, DOMARK, CRASH (Yours Truly), SOLUTION PUBLIC RELATIONS and MEL CROUCHER WORLDWIDE ENTERTAINMENT ENTERPRISES UNLIMITED (Mel Croucher) felt they couldn't avoid picking two winners. As a result two GENESIS games are planned: a shoot em up should appear in time for Christmas followed by an arcade adventure early in the Spring. Full details of the designers and their winning designs appear in the News and the Results Pages this issue. You can expect to be reading a lot more about the progress of the GENESIS project over the coming months. . . .

THE MONTHLY SOFTWARE STAR FOR YOUR US GOLD CALENDAR

US GOLD
CRASH

INDEX TO GAMES REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE



KERRASH!

ACTING AS MIDWIVES IN THE BIRTH OF A GAME

Both the volume and standard of entries to the GENESIS — Birth of a Game competition were "stunning" according to the judges who assembled in a darkened hotel room somewhere in Birmingham for the final judging ceremony.

An Executive Minion at CRASH Towers spent over twelve hours just opening the entries to the competition and sorting them into some semblance of order before they were loaded into the Editor's car and shipped to Brum.

Judging began shortly after 11.00am, and after some discussion as to how they were ever going to manage to come up with a shortlist of entries let alone a winner, the judging panel set to work with a vengeance. As they ploughed through the entries, the members of the team specially assembled to pick a winner were continually amazed by the standard of presentation and quality of ideas contained in the entries. After a working lunch — a few plates of sarnies — and many difficult decisions, it was nearly teatime and the vast pile of GENESIS entries had been whittled down to a manageable shortlist.

Coffee was served and some detailed analysis of the remaining game designs followed. Several designs that were full of merit but somehow didn't seem likely to make a mainstream game were put to one side. With their senders' permission, these will be forwarded to companies active in the budget software market for further consideration.

After much discussion, two game designs were left in the lead, and two entries marked for an 'Award of Merit'. Finally, two contes-

SAVE SOME LUVVERLY LOOT!

Ian Andrew, bossman at INCENTIVE was well chuffed to learn that The Graphic Adventure Creator had been awarded CRASH Smash status this month. So pleased, that he's prepared to let CRASH readers save £3.00 on the recommended price of £22.95.

Sean Masterson takes a close look at the adventure writing utility written for the Spectrum by Brendon Kelly on page 84 of this issue. If you're tempted to start writing adventures, use the bijou couponette that appears here to order *GAC* direct from INCENTIVE and you'll have three more pounds to spend as you like . . .

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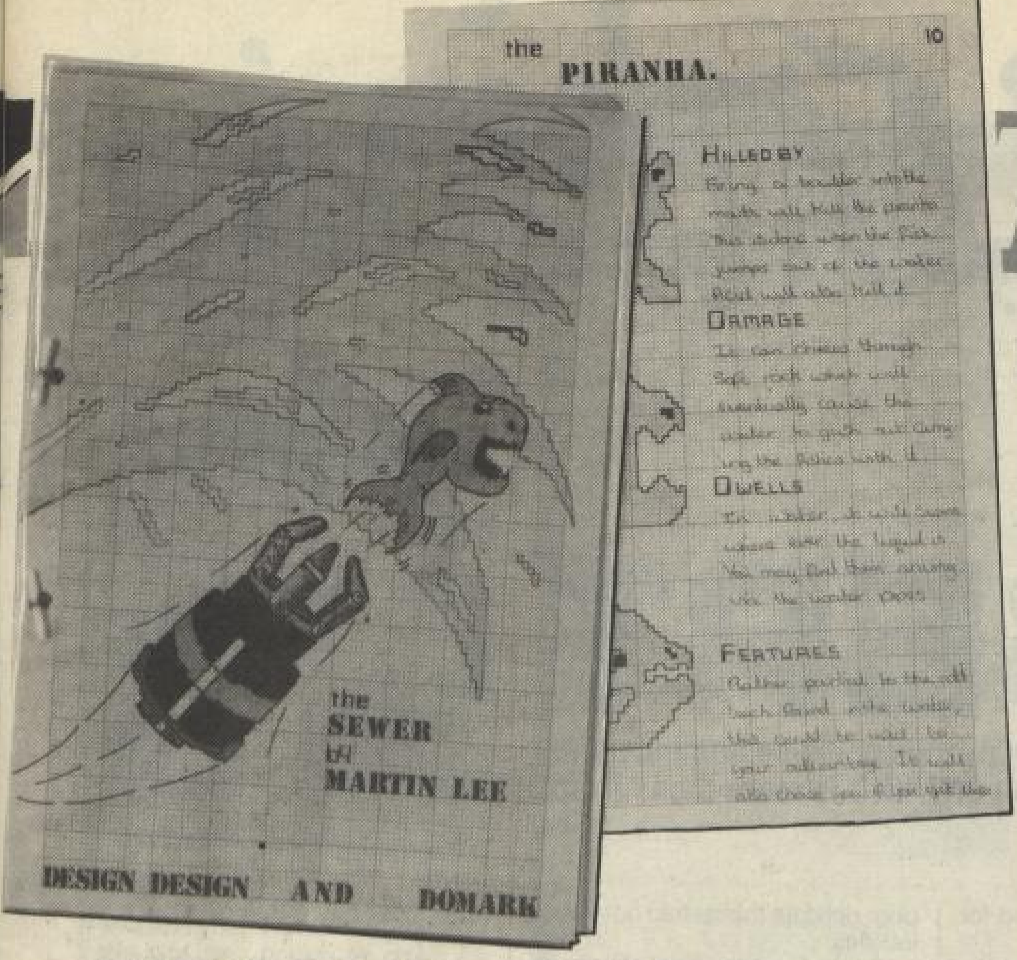
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tants were left to slug it out in the ring of ideas. The judges pondered, agonised, talked amongst themselves, ordered more coffee and then held a full meeting. It was clear that there had to be two winners, not one.

***KAT TRAP — Planet of the Cat Men*, dreamt up by John Eggleton** was selected as the first GENESIS inspired game and should be out before Christmas, while *The Sewer* from **Martin Lee** is going to be programmed in time for a Spring release.

Leper Attack at Lemming Rock, a design submitted by **Ian Bell** was well received by the judges — in the game you play the part of a lemming hero whose aim in life to free his lemming colony from the threat posed by the Leper King and his evil minions. The final confrontation with the King requires the hero to fight in a very unorthodox manner — a flatulence attack is the only way to kill off the arch baddie!

Nigel Palmer's game design for *Headache* was felt to be a little short on actual gameplay, but the core idea was sound and supported by a wealth of material covering the marketing and presentation of the game itself. Both Ian and Nigel win a Special Commendation from the judges. CRASH/DOMARK/DESIGN DESIGN goodiebags will be on their way to the two runners up very shortly.

Graham and **Dave** from DESIGN DESIGN duly scampered back to their Manchester lair to begin work on *KAT TRAP*, and by the time you read they will have had a meeting with John Eggleton and the game should be well underway. Take a peek at the Results pages for a few more details of the judge's shortlist and stand by for a progress report on the programming next month . . .





John Eggleton, designer of KAT TRAP, soon to find fame and fortune as his game concept is turned into reality by DESIGN DESIGN for release by DOMARK



SO YOU THINK YOU CAN PLAY MATCH DAY?

There's no doubt that there's a strong Match Day **following amongst CRASH readers — one of you is even planning to set up the MATCH DAY APPRECIATION SOCIETY. Perhaps it is time to admit that we should have made the game a Smash when we reviewed it . . .**

During an interview with *John Ritman* **and** *Chris Clarke*, **the people who wrote this famous OCEAN game, the idea of holding a** Match Day **Challenge was mooted and met with all-round approval. So, towards the end of October, John and Chris are going to wend their way up from The Smoke to the sleepy market town of Ludlow with the aim of taking on the cream of the CRASH's** Match Day **playing readership.**

Which is where you come in. We're going to pit this programming duo against a CRASH staffer and a selection of readers, and report on the tournament in the December issue. If you can win at International Level with a score of 15-0 or better, John and Chris reckon you might be in with a chance (!).

If you're a skilled Match Day **player, and fancy a trip to Ludlow at our expense as well as the chance of fame, drop us a line at CRASH MATCH DAY CHALLENGE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB before 25th September. There's no way we can validate your prowess in advance, but remember, if you tell fibs about your footballing skills you'll look a real wally when Chris and John inflict a crushing defeat, and all the other CRASH readers get to read about your humiliation . . .**

Fear & Loathing

IN SEARCH OF SHERBERT



Last month, something went severely wrong with this column. It was nothing more than rumour and scurrilous gossip. And FEAR AND LOATHING is more than cheap jibes.

Sadly jibes come no cheaper than those aimed at Cracked and Tubby at THALAMUS. They're ten a penny. Latest from the Islington institute for overindulgence is that then dynamic duo, Flathead and Captain Corpulent, the tea boy wonder, crashed their Pratmobile.

Yes, in just one week, they managed to total the company car — a Datsun Cherry — no fewer than three times! The last concussion was so conclusive that the poor Nipponese auto is nixed. But commiserations to both of them on the loss of their Cherry.

But no more. We turn to more serious criticisms. My fan club has been writing in to complain about my self-indulgent fantasies. I was particularly taken with **Mr C H Evans**' query, "Who is this stupid little prat?" Well, **CH**, actually I'm rather a big "little prat" and as to your brave challenge, "he can try to rip out my liver if he wants to", I wouldn't wish to touch any of your organs. Instead I have an electric drill, hammer action, reserved for my next visit to Powys!

J A Attwood of Norwich, a city torn apart by its inner city hooligan element, comes closer to the mark. He complains about my fixation with food and a certain vodka and tomato juice cocktail. I agree! Boozing and drinking are not fit subjects for young, impressionable readers. But what can replace them? I fancy a certain white powder that you suck up through a straw. Yes. Sherbert. This months quest is for a baggie of sherbert.

And this month's quest begins at the Grosvenor House launch of *Dragons Lair* by SOFTWARE PROJECTS. The Spectrum version of the game they said couldn't be done wasn't done, of course, apart from the final screen. It looked fun, but don't expect the laser disc graphics of the arcade original.

No guzzling here though, Attwood. The butties were curvier than boomerangs. I suspect they were of Liverpudlian origin but the poor delicate things had not travelled well.

THE EDGE was celebrating its fourth birthday and a move to new Covent Garden premises with a bit of a bash a day or two after. Plenty of icing sugar topping the cake, but no sign of sherbert. Still, a wacky time was had by all, especially my Swedish girlfriend, who was chatted up by a succession of software types.

Funniest faux pas came from a tyro freelance journalist who was wandering round touting for business. He sidled up to her and having introduced himself, asked her if she heard any software stories to tell him. I can only think this is the sort of guy who would ask Paula Yates for gossip about Bob Geldof!

By now I was itching for some of the fizzy stuff. Sure I could have scored a deal down at the corner shop, but I prefer to lig everything! So I went BEYOND Southampton Street, where I found **Francis Lee** and the gang sporting pointy ears and uttering "Beam me up, Scotty."

Luckily Baxter was present to lunch me and drop the odd hint that this outbreak of irrational behaviour was related to some new release or other.

Apparently the BEYOND stand at the PCW show will be shaped like the Enterprise . . . though why anybody should want a stand modelled on a now defunct micro is beyond me.

Something fishy about the next port of call. PIRANHA software is a new name, but behind it lurks an age old concern, MACMILLAN, the book publishers. So when they splashed out on an informal launch do, it was in the oak-lined splendour of the WB Yeats room.

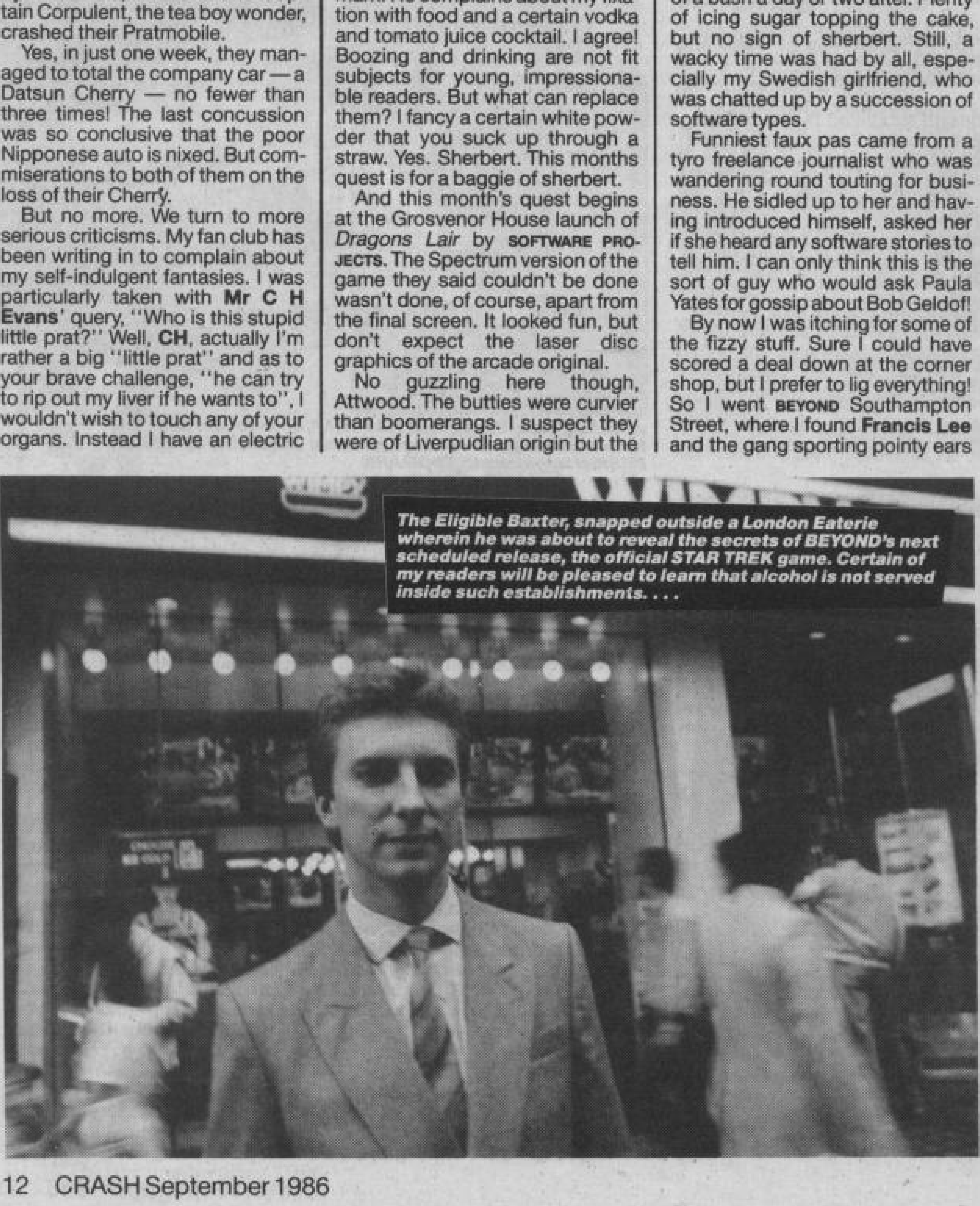
The meal was rather less staid than the surroundings, consisting of a selection of painfully punning nibbles on the piranha theme. The *Piranha Balls* caused much merriment, I can tell you. The *Piranha Cocktail*, which turned out to be Black Velvet, was much more palatable. But I'm talking about alcohol again.

Suddenly a charming lady named **Mandy** sidled up to me, and offered me something very special if I'd only let her digitise me! What she meant was that *Strike Force Cobra*, one of the first PIRANHA releases, is to feature photos of the team members, and it was up to us mega-butch journos to portray those micro-chip marvels.

There were eight of us who had our piccies snapped and no, I won't tell you which one of the *Cobra Force* I am, except to say that the grease paint moustache and eye make up (eye make up!) didn't wash off quite as easily as Mandy had suggested, and I was followed round the PC User business show all that afternoon by somebody called Bruce.

Back to my payment for suffering this indignity. Did I get a Barret's Sinus Clearing Sherbert Fountain? No! I got a fluffy toy piranha. The company had fifty of these specially made, and extremely cute they are. I've called mine Alan after the biggest piranha I know.

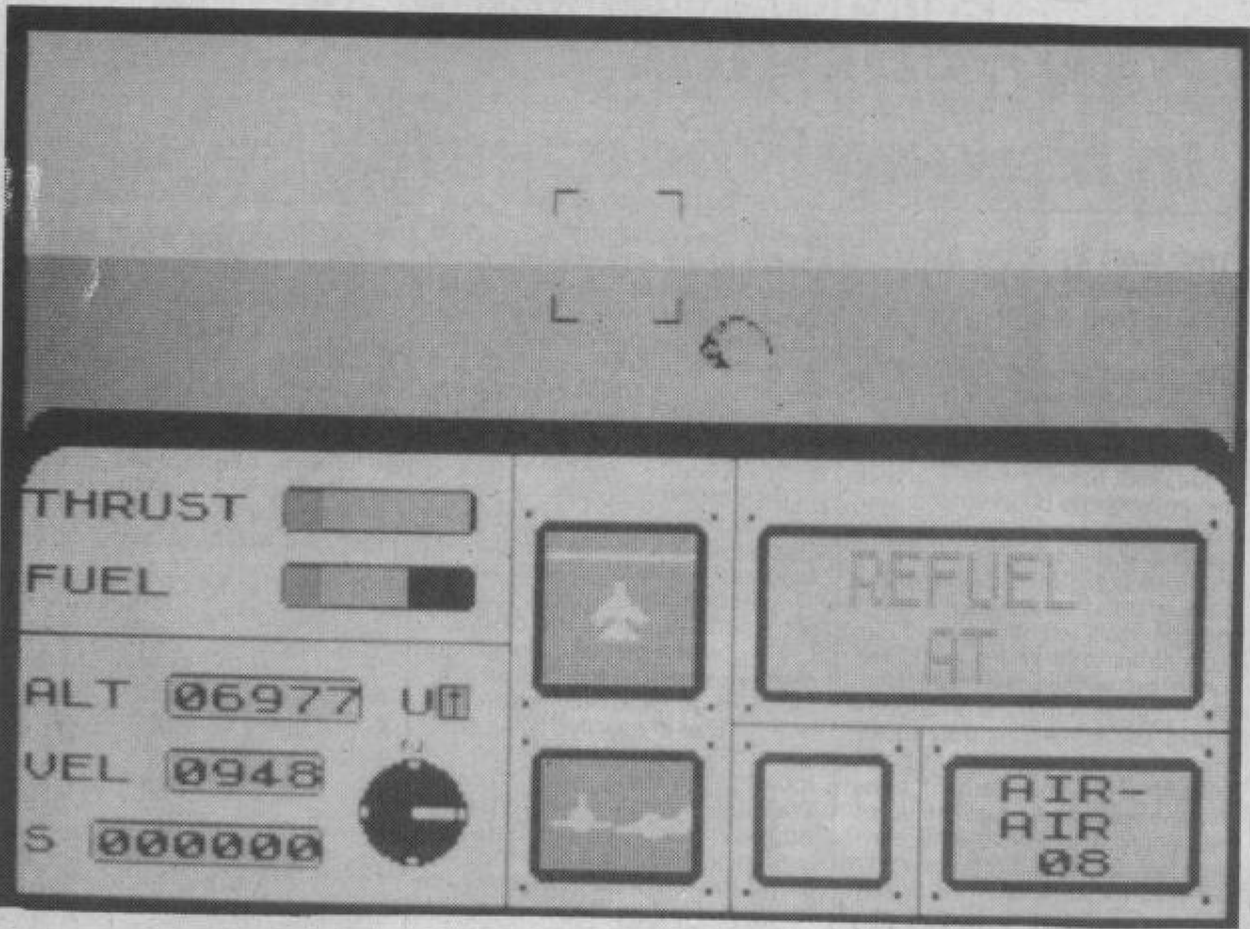
Hunger S. Minson



The Eligible Baxter, snapped outside a London Eaterie wherein he was about to reveal the secrets of BEYOND's next scheduled release, the official STAR TREK game. Certain of my readers will be pleased to learn that alcohol is not served inside such establishments. . . .

ACE

Producer: Cascade
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Paul Laidlaw**



Eeek, an enemy fleet has invaded our sunny shores. The landing craft beach on the shingle and offload the tanks, troops and surface-to-air missile bases. Enemy fighters and helicopters cover the ground forces while the fleet anchors off the bay, waiting to discharge more troops or evacuate the land forces if things get too hot.

At the Allied base the radars start bleeping. The warning sirens begin to scream as the invasion becomes apparent. As you race towards your aircraft the gravity of the situation begins to dawn on you. Unless the enemy invaders are destroyed Great Britain will fall into foreign hands.

The Allied base possesses three AWAT combat aircraft. It's up to you, as an AWAT pilot, to defend the southern coast of your homeland against the marauding invaders. The game begins with a series of options which must be selected before the craft can become airborne. The mission can be flown under summer or winter condi-

are nine skill levels altogether, level one being a training mode. This is identical to a normal mission except that the enemy planes don't fire back at you.

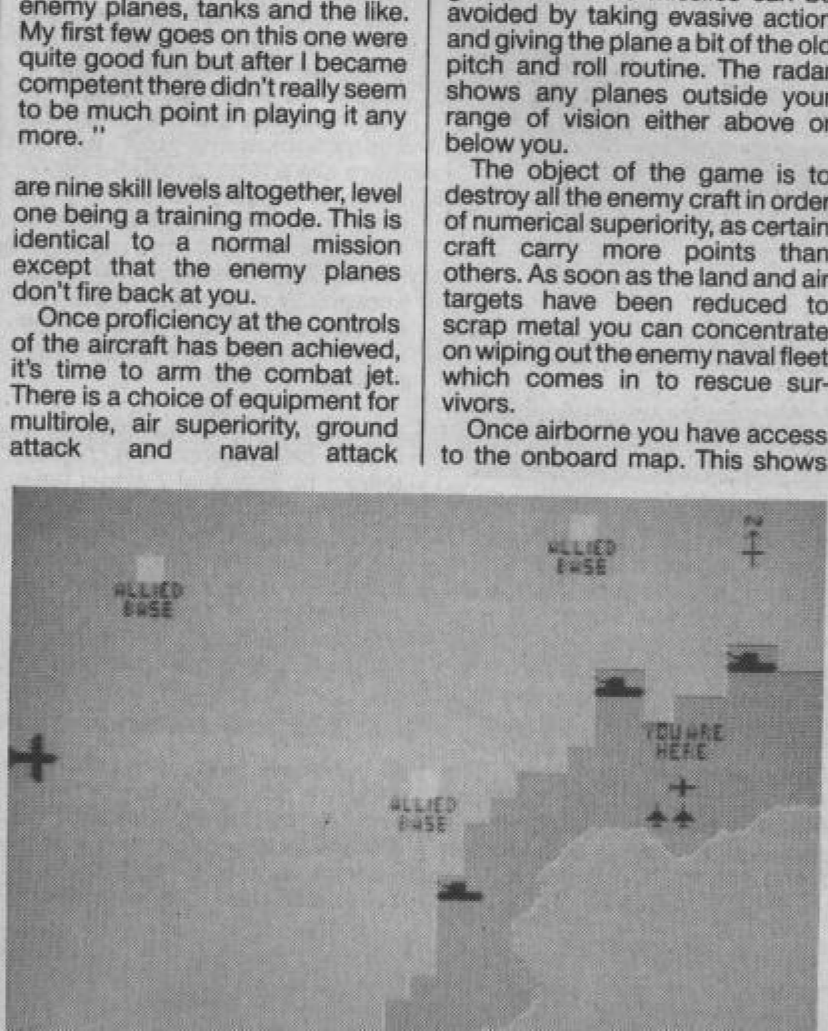
Once proficiency at the controls of the aircraft has been achieved, it's time to arm the combat jet. There is a choice of equipment for multirole, air superiority, ground attack and naval attack capabilities. An unusual aspect of this flight simulation game is the two player option. A second player can join you in the jet fighter to take control of the weapons systems while you concentrate on avoiding the enemy's missiles.

The inside of the cockpit contains all the regular controls you would expect to find. There's also a rear camera so you can see if any of the baddies are creeping up from behind. If an enemy missile attack hits home, it's usually the rear-view camera that is the first to go. Most of the missiles can be avoided by taking evasive action and giving the plane a bit of the old pitch and roll routine. The radar shows any planes outside your range of vision either above or below you.

The object of the game is to destroy all the enemy craft in order of numerical superiority, as certain craft carry more points than others. As soon as the land and air targets have been reduced to scrap metal you can concentrate on wiping out the enemy naval fleet which comes in to rescue survivors.

Once airborne you have access to the onboard map. This shows the exact positions of the enemy planes and ground forces as well as the Allied bases which you must make for if a landing for damage repairs is needed. Fuel is a major problem. Flying at very high altitudes uses up a lot of fuel, and when the tanks get a bit too empty, a message flashes up on the screen to point out that a refuelling session is called for. Refuelling has to be done in mid-air.

If things get too hot to handle, there is always the option to eject. Try and eject over Allied territory, won't you? Skilled AWAT pilots are hard to find, and they're not much use cooped up in POW camps!



CRITICISM

● **" This game is excellent, and possibly the Spectrum's best flight simulator. The scenario is a little unrealistic: apparently we have three Allied air bases, but only one fighter pilot . . . Still, the game is very good. The unresponsiveness that has dogged so many flight simulators is almost non-existent, and the graphics, of a similar sprite-like quality of those seen in** Skyfox, **are much smoother and more attractive. The high score table is very good, with a Save facility, and the facility to record dates. Unless you hate flight simulators, I'd recommend this game pretty highly. "**

● *" There's no shortage of flight simulators on the Spectrum market — but unfortunately not too many of them are good. ACE is certainly a good try, but I didn't feel it had enough there to keep me interested while playing — the screen tended to look too blank too much of the time. The controls are the same as your basic flight simulator and all placed on the most obvious keys. I felt the control of the plane was a bit too slack for any serious flying to take place. The idea of having a fuel plane to dock with is great, but to get there you would have to have a full tank of aviation fuel — which seems to ruin the whole plan.*

● " Usually I avoid flight sim's like the plague because after wading through all the instructions the game itself is often awful. This, I'm afraid to say is no different from many of the others except that there are fewer instructions and you only need twenty fingers to play it. There are less than minimal sound effects which is probably a blessing as the endless engine drone would probably drive me up the wall. The graphics are about average for this type of game, very jerky and slow moving, although there are some nicely detailed enemy planes, tanks and the like. My first few goes on this one were quite good fun but after I became competent there didn't really seem to be much point in playing it any more. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q quit, M map, U undercarriage, W down, S up, E bank left, R bank right, X fire, ENTER select, CAPS/SHIFT decrease thrust, Z increase
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: a bit uninspired at times
Graphics: average
Sound: quiet!
Skill levels: nine
Screens: scrolling display
General rating: above average for this type of game

Use of computer	78%
Graphics	80%
Playability	78%
Getting started	81%
Addictive qualities	77%
Value for money	77%
Overall	81%

Reviews

DANGERMOUSE In Making Whoopee!



Producer: Sparklers
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Phil Snell**

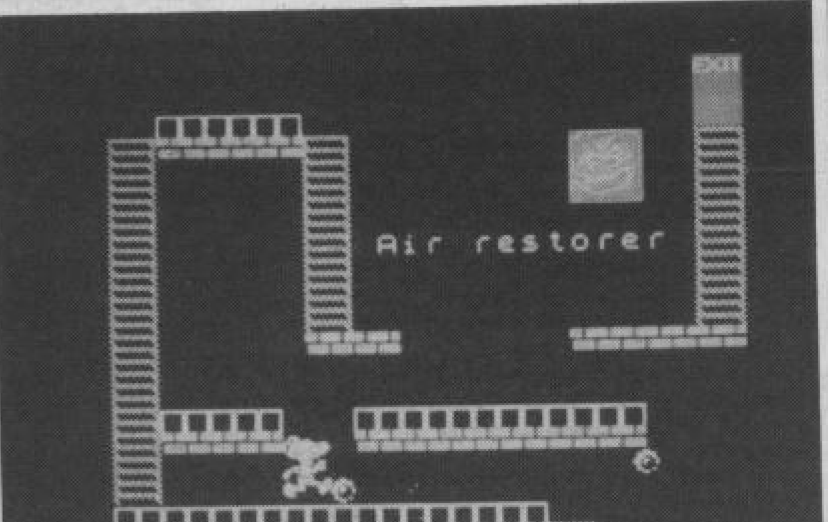
Danger Mouse is taking a well-earned holiday down in Cheddar Gorge in the sunny West Country. It should be a nice quiet holiday as he's on his own without the bespectaled and easily startled Penfold, but despite the beautiful countryside, DM is finding it hard to relax. Even the famous Cheddar Cheese Straws can't put his mind at rest.

Eventually his worst fears are confirmed: a telegram from Colonel K tells him that Baron Greenback is up to his dastardly tricks again. Poor little Penfold has been kidnapped by the Baron's henchmen. But's that's just the tip of the iceberg. The grotesque Greenback has come up with his worst plan ever for ultimate World Domination . . .

At his hideout in Chicago, the Baron and his minions are busy manufacturing thousands of Whoopee cushions. Strange. But there is method behind this madness. supply the Baron with power and materials for cushion factory. If DM manages to shut down enough of these factories, when he eventually gets through to the Whoopee cushion plant he'll find it a lot easier to burst the cushions with the P.I.N (Pointed Imploding Needle) because there will be less of them.

The screen shows a three dimensional view of Danger Mouse in his car as he battles around the city looking for clues. The bottom half of the screen shows the layout of the city with DM's position marked, along with obstacles such as the Troll with no Plaice to go, who only moves out of your way if you give him a fish. Gedditt? Useful objects can be found by visiting store rooms. Walking through the unmarked doors in the store rooms, DM must try and navigate his way to the blue exit at the top of the screen. When he gets to this stage, a useful object is offered to him.

When DM finds one of the baron's factories he must avoid whatever is being manufactured there and get to the top of the



Scampering through storeroom, DM does his best to get another useful item in his quest to defeat the Bad Baron

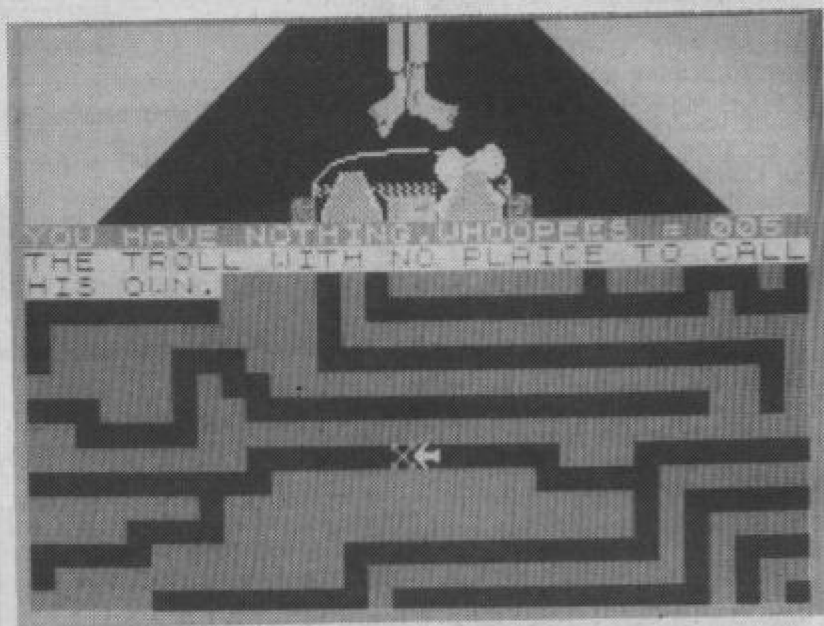
The plan is to put them on every seat in the United Nations. So at the next meeting there will be so many blushes and apologies in every language imaginable that during the ensuing chaos Greenback will be able to sneak in and take over the world.

Danger Mouse casts aside his packet of Cheese straws and sets off for Chicago. Quite apart from the Baron's sinister whoopee cushion factory, a number of gas making factories and power stations must be shut down as they screen to the exit door in much the same way as he did in the store rooms. Then it's back into the car and off somewhere else.

While Danger Mouse is hunting around the city looking for clues, the Baron is making more and more cushions. When the number gets to 100 the game ends and Greenback has triumphed. The number of whoopee cushions trundling off the production line is shown at the bottom of the screen along with any bonus marks.

CRITICISM

● "**Danger Mouse games could be really good as he is an extremely versatile character, unfortunately he doesn't seem to have been used to his greatest effect or ability yet, and all the games in which he has starred have been a bit on the boring side. Controlling Danger Mouse's car is at first very hard to get used to, so it is easy to get lost in the maze. The game plays quite slowly and once you've seen a few screens there is little variation, and boredom sets in. The graphics are colourful but there are a lot of attribute problems. The sound is fairly good with some nice spot effects in the game, and the Danger Mouse theme tune on the title screen. Not a bad piece of cheapo software — it would be nice if it was a little more compelling.**"



The maze of city streets through which our intrepid rodent hero travels on his way to thwart the plans of arch villain, Baron Greenback

● "*For £1.99, this is a fair game. If it had been priced any higher, there's no way that I would have said anything nice about it. The graphics are not particularly good, but they give the right impression. Playability wise, DM is good, but nothing special. Despite the different screens, it doesn't hold much in the way of interesting action. For the price, worth a look, methinks.*"

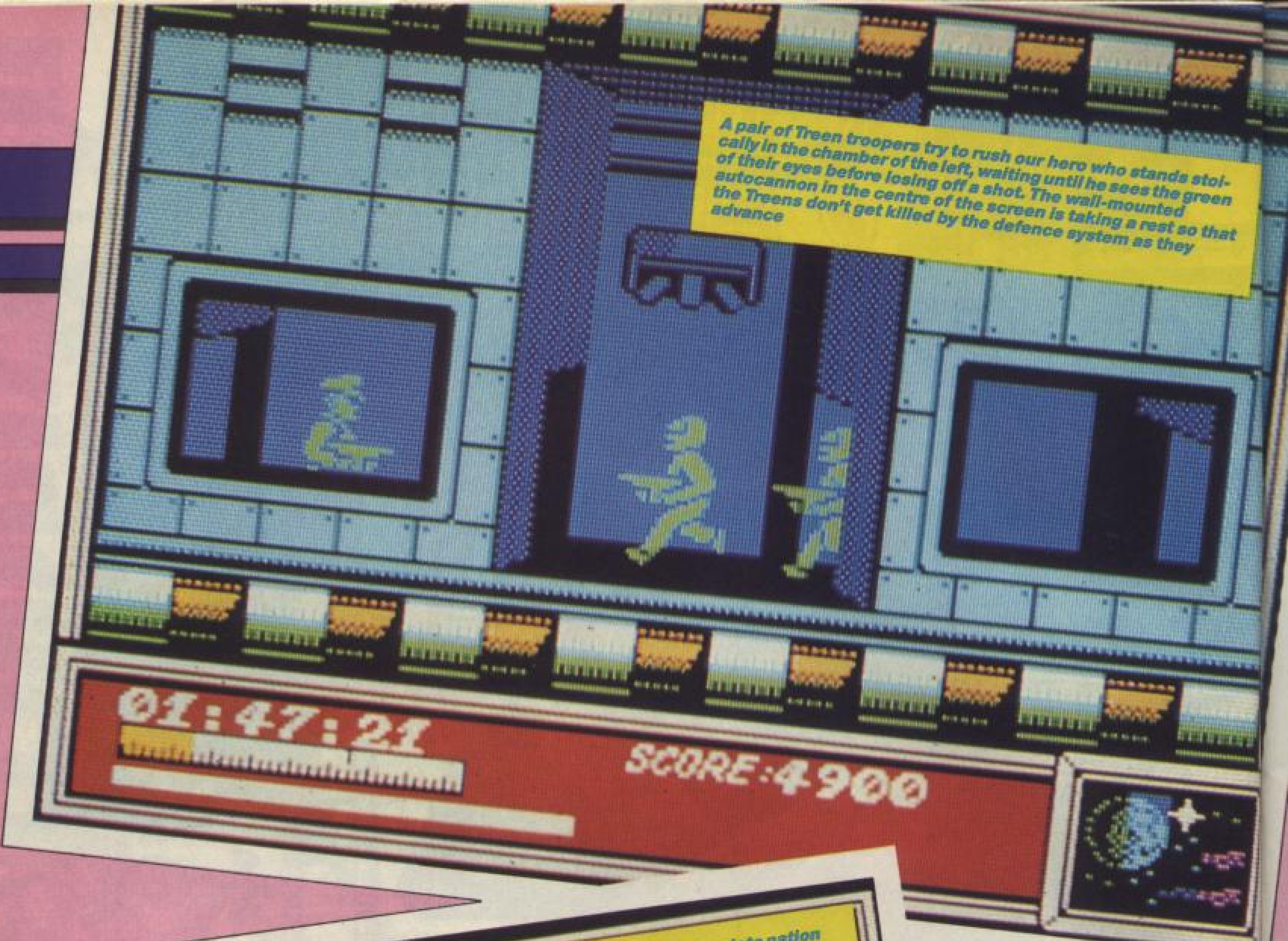
● "Yes, we all know that Danger Mouse is great: I love the TV series and all that stuff. The look of *DMMW* is very good, and a valid attempt is made at drawing a believable road. Danger Mouse turns the corners in the road in a very realistic fashion, and is drawn very accurately and animated beautifully, even down to the odd glance around while playing. After the appeal of the game had worn off, I couldn't see much more than a basic maze game — which made me understand why it was only £1.99. The sound on the title screen is an extremely loud and accurate rendition of the DM theme tune, this and the DM character were the only pulling points of the game. I couldn't find much else to validate the lashing out of nearly two hundred pennies."

COMMENTS

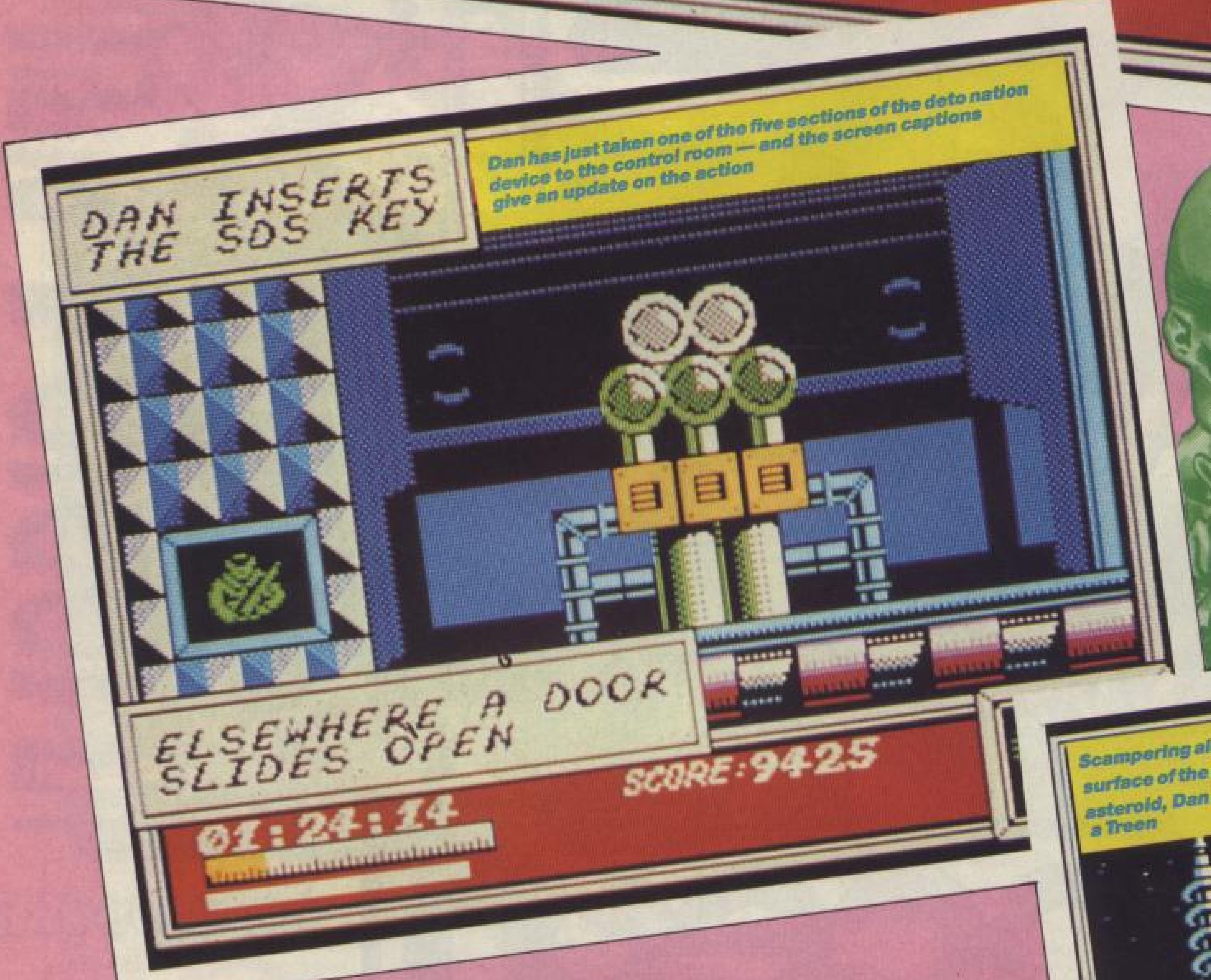
Control keys: O left, P right, Q up, A reverse direction/down, 0 fire/jump, 1 status screen, 2 continue game, 5 abandon game
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: fine, but a bit tricky controlling the car
Use of colour: par for the budget course
Graphics: nothing remarkable
Sound: jolly tune, fair effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: scrolling maze
General rating: A reasonable game, given the price

Use of computer	59%
Graphics	59%
Playability	56%
Getting started	56%
Addictive qualities	56%
Value for money	58%
Overall	**56%**


IT'S A SCREAM!
It's a Holler!
IT'S A HOOT!
It's a cracker!
IT'S A GIGGLE!
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A pair of Treen troopers try to rush our hero who stands stoically in the chamber of the left, waiting until he sees the green of their eyes before losing off a shot. The wall-mounted autocannon in the centre of the screen is taking a rest so that the Treens don't get killed by the defence system as they advance



Dan has just taken one of the five sections of the deto nation device to the control room — and the screen captions give an update on the action





Scampering along on the surface of the evil Mekon's asteroid, Dan puts paid to a Treen

D·A·N D·A·R·E



Dan Dare lives dangerously. Most of the time he has no choice — heroic deeds are forced upon him because he's the bravest guy around. This time the nasty Mekon has decided to hold the world to ransom. Dan's just about to receive the highest accolade of all — an appearance on 'This is Your Life' — when the TV waves are unceremoniously taken over by the ugly visage of the Mekon. Earth must either submit to him as commander of the universe or accept the dire consequences . . .

The Mekon has hollowed out an asteroid, the size of a small planet, and has set it on a collision course with Earth. If Earth agrees to the Mekon's demands, the nasty asteroid will be detonated and the Earth rendered safe again. The only snag is that a green slimy alien will rule the world. Is the Mekon going to get his wicked way? Not if Dan Dare can help it!

Accompanied by his faithful friend Digby, Dan Dare sets off in his speedy spaceship,the Anastasia, and heads for the approaching asteroid. When they arrive on the Mekon's space projectile, Dan leaves Digby to guard the ship and starts to explore the asteroid. He has a mere two hours at his disposal to save the world from alien domination.

Dan soon realises his task is going to be far more difficult than he first thought. For one thing the asteroid is inhabited by Treens, alien troopers guarding the Mekon's blackmail vehicle. Should a Treen catch up with Dan, the hero loses energy and might well be taken prisoner. Treens can also knock him out which, like doing a bit of 'porridge', loses Dan valuable time. Laser bolts fired by the automatic defence systems (and the Treens) are also bad for Dan's health and well-being. Fortunately, Dan is not defenceless, and is equipped with a nifty laser gun which makes short shrift of any Treens that get in the way of a laser blast.

Dan finds himself in a subterranean world in which there are five levels. He has to find his way through a network of floors, travelling up and down in lifts, until he finds the self-destruct mechanism which will obliterate the asteroid before it has chance to collide with the Earth. To do this, however, five vital pieces of the mechanism have to be found and assembled in the control room — one part of the contraption has been hidden on each level. The lifts work sporadically, and indicator arrows reveal the directions of travel available.

Dan is a superfit fellow, capable of moving left and right, up and down, and he can jump over chasms and duck to avoid Treen laser bolts. To help him in his quest, a variety of objects lying around can be collected by jumping onto them, including bullets to boost his arsenal and pills to increase his energy.

As the game loads, the faces of the two protagonists — Dan Dare and the dreaded Mekon — are displayed on screen, and the action starts with the Anastasia speeding towards the asteroid. The game follows the flick screen format, with the status area below the action zone. The total score and the amount of time Dan has left in hours, minutes and seconds is displayed and two bars indicate the strength of Dan's arsenal and his energy level.

During play, screen captions in the style of the original comic strips pop on screen from time to time to explain what has happened to Dan — when he's knocked unconscious, for example. If Dan manages to thwart the Mekon's plan, the Anastasia is shown speeding away from the asteroid just before it explodes and then the end sequence displays the explosion itself.

CRITICISM

" I must confess to not being an avid reader of the old Dan Dare comic strip, but of course like everyone else I've heard all about his dealings with the Mekon. This game defies all adjectives — to my mind, it's one of the best on the Spectrum. If you thought ULTIMATE had hit new boundaries on the Spectrum, then take a look at this. The graphics are amazing: I wondered if it was really a Spectrum that was producing these amazingly colourful graphics. Dan is superbly animated and doesn't slow down one iota when lots of baddies appear on the screen. I found that Dan Dare **was extremely playable and a pleasure to play. You have to buy it to believe it. "**

CRITICISM

" At first sight Dan Dare **didn't really appeal to me as it didn't seem that original, but after playing for a while it did start to grow on me. The game is fairly easy to play; running around the place shooting green nasties and retracing your steps at high speed isn't exactly brain taxing, but it's jolly good fun all the same. The graphics are good: all the characters move around smoothly and the backgrounds are very pretty. The sound when compared to the graphics is a major disappointment — only a couple of spot effects in the whole game. A very slick piece of programming, but I wonder if I'll still be playing** Dan Dare **in a couple of weeks' time . . . "**

CRITICISM

" Anyone out there, who didn't read the old Eagle comics? I loved the comic strips, and I like the game too. The graphics are very good, but the colour is simply astounding — surely the best on the Spectrum yet? Dan passes in front of and behind the scenery without the slightest sign of attribute clash. The game is playable, addictive, and generally well worth the time, effort, and money of any self respecting Spectrum owner or Dan Dare fan. "





Producer: Virgin
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **The Gang of Five**

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q up, A down, P right, B, N, M, SYM SHIFT, SPACE to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor
Keyboard play: no problems
Use of colour: very cleverly done, bright and attractive
Graphics: excellent
Sound: not enough, really
Skill levels: one
Screens: 125/130 (ish)
General rating: A game which lives up to the image of the cartoon character

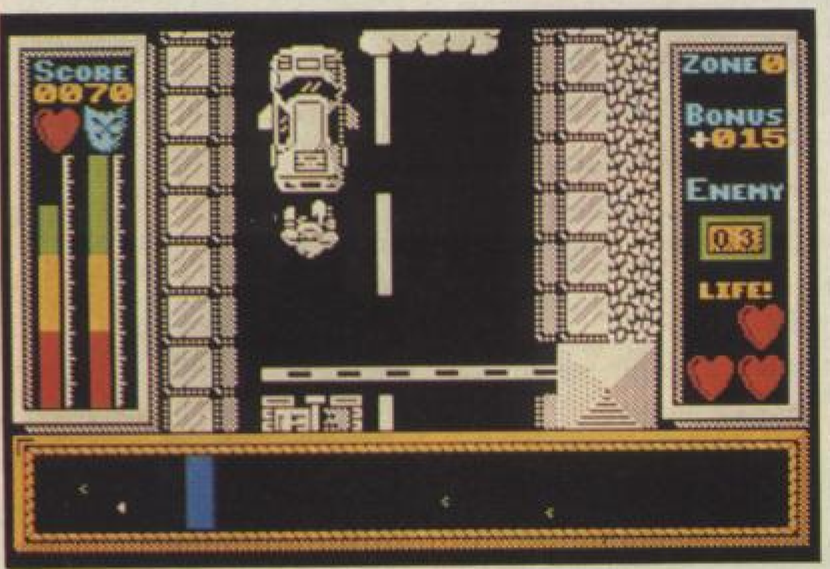
Use of computer	**93%**
Graphics	**95%**
Playability	**93%**
Getting started	**91%**
Addictive qualities	**91%**
Value for money	**90%**
Overall	**92%**

STAINLESS STEEL

Producer: Mikro-Gen
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Dave Perry**

Ricky Steel is here! The new teenage super hero with the mechanical arm has finally arrived. Just in time, it seems, to save the world from the evil Dr Vardos and his merciless minions. First on foot and then in his combat vehicle Nightwind, Ricky weaves and dodges his way past the the back and forth trying to eradicate Ricky, but Nightwind is equipped with a powerful laser cannon, which evens the odds a little as Ricky dodges and weaves his way towards Dr Vardos and his hideout. All the enemy forces have to be wiped out before the zone is completed.

In the third zone, battle resumes over a watery channel. Nightwind is amphibious as well as capable of aerobatics and as he deals with the airborne threat, Ricky has to



Having negotiated the mean streets in Zone Zero, ace lensperson Cameron Pound snaps the Steel Hero as he enters Nightwind . . .

enemy craft sent by the evil doctor as he heads towards the ultimate confrontation — with Vardos himself!

The action is seen from above and the play area scrolls up and down. The game contains four zones, each with its own set of hazards which become successively more treacherous. Enemy craft can approach from either in front or behind so Ricky has to be constantly alert — if his concentration wavers for a second, the android army commanded by Dr V is likely to send him to that scrapheap in the sky.

In the first zone Ricky has to leg it along the tarmac, avoiding helicopters which have the capacity to blast him to smithereens with their missiles. A collision with a chopper is also fatal. Fortunately, Rick can fire missiles too, and he also has a bomb shield to soften the effects of enemy attack. Trundling past traffic jams and road barriers while destroying android patrol ships which move across the road, the man with a steel arm has to make for the end of the zone and a reunion with his cherished motor.

In zone two, aboard Nightwind and flying through the air, Ricky's task is a little harder. Bubbles of fuel need to be collected to keep the super-car in the air as the dynamic duo fight their way across a desert. Rockets come zooming watch out for submarines which pop up from the water every so often. Plonking a bomb on the deck of a submarine requires sharp reactions and quick timing, but lots of points are there for the winning!

The final zone is populated by androids in the shape of lizards and salamanders as well as Dr Vardos' other minions. Their aim is to thwart Ricky's noble attempt to save the world by finding and eliminating the evil Dr Vardos.

Status displays flank the main action screen: on the left, Ricky's energy and shield or arsenal strength is displayed below the score meter; on the right the zone number is displayed, together with the bonus points awarded, the number of androids that remain in the zone, and large red hearts indicate how many of Ricky's four lives remain. If the enemy forces are not shot down fast enough, it's possible to end up with a negative bonus score, so quick shooting is the order of the day . . . A radar screen below the main display reveals Ricky's position in relation to the nasties in the current zone, and a message is flashed onto this screen when Ricky bites the dust.

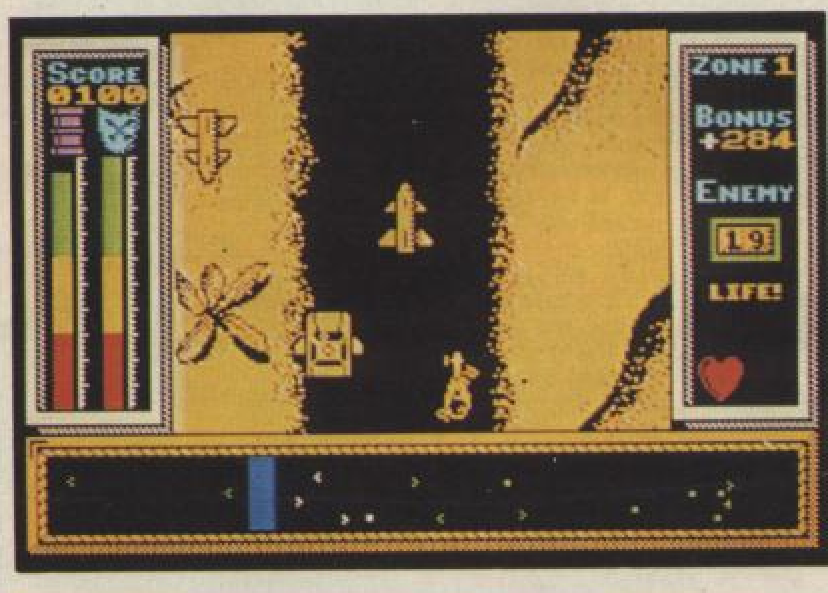
Steel by name and steel by nature: it takes more than a few androids to despatch a teenage super hero. MIKRO-GEN plan to produce further games starring Ricky, but first he has to beat Dr Vardos

CRITICISM

● **" Well, last month there was a crowd around the demo of this game, with everyone saying how brilliant it was. I think that compared with** Equinox **— Dave Perry's last game — this is well worth a Smash. The first few levels are very, very hard but once you work out a method they start to get quite playable. The idea behind the game isn't exactly original, but it is presented in a very nice way. Graphically it's excellent! The scrolling is brilliant, as are the characters which are after you. I am generally very impressed as it is playable, pretty and compelling. "**

● " Stainless Steel *contains excellent graphics and superb*





Zone One and Nightwind zooms across the desert with an android missile up ahead and a helicopter about to fly off the bottom of the screen. One life left and n..n..nineteen enemy droids to eradicate. Cameron's got his work cut out here . . .

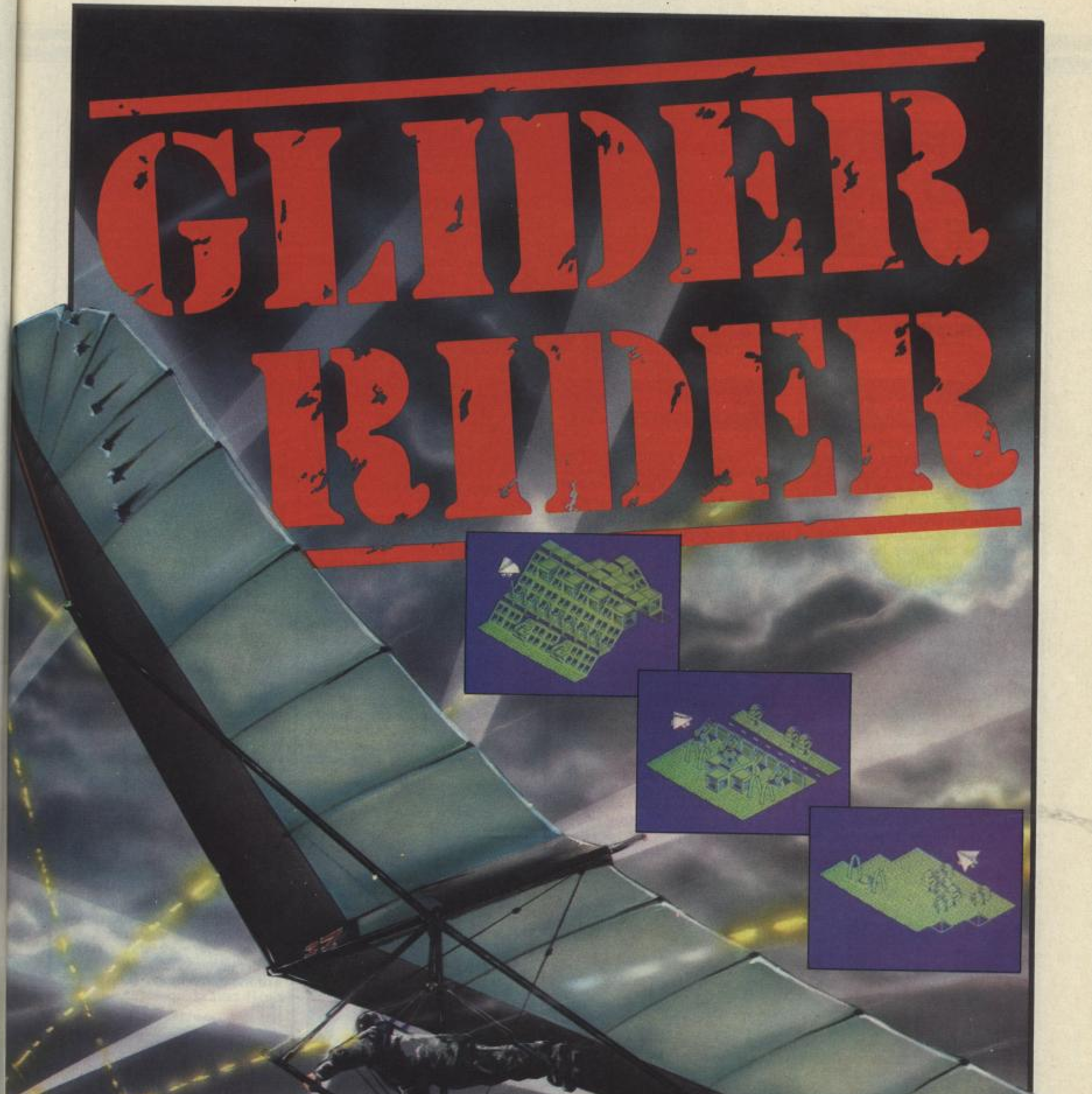
sound effects; the game is very simple but very addictive. There are some great sound effects, and it's a shame you have to reload to hear more of the title tune — it's great. As shoot 'em ups go, Stainless Steel *is very addictive — mainly due to the large scanner at the bottom of the screen that tells you exactly how far away you are from the end of the section. The graphics are superb and quite original, with detailed backgrounds throughout the game. Shoot em up fanatics will go wild over SS to start with, but I'm afraid they may find it too annoying because when you die you go right back to the beginning. Attractive but infuriating. "*

● " *Stainless Steel* is a great shoot 'em up. It has got very good graphics, excellent sound, and on top of that, a lot of playability — it's addictive, too. One thing that niggles me is the fact that when you die, the game takes you right back to the beginning of that level. Minor quibbles apart, Ricky Steel's first game is an excellent blast-the-enemy production, and he stands a good chance of becoming a real super hero if this standard is kept up. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable: Up/Thrust, Down/Turn, Left, Right, Fire and Bomb/Shield
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: fine
Use of colour: monochromatic action
Graphics: very neatly done
Sound: tune on loading, plus good effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: four scrolling zones
General rating: A slick shoot 'em up without too much depth

Use of computer	90%
Graphics	92%
Playability	87%
Getting started	90%
Addictive qualities	88%
Value for money	88%
Overall	89%



Trained to kill, you must penetrate the defenses of Abraxas, destroy the terrorist H.Q. and glide to safety.

In case of difficulty, Glider Rider can be obtained from Quicksilva Ltd., Units 1 and 2, Conlon Developments, Watery Lane, Darwen, Lancs BBC3 2ET.

QUICKSILVA

Quicksilva Ltd., Victory House,
Leicester Place,
London WC2H 7NB.
Tel: 01-439 0666

RUPERT AND THE ICE CASTLE

Producer: Bug Byte
Retail Price: **£2.99**
Author: **Bug Byte**

Rupert and his chums are getting some serious hassle from Jenny Frost, Jack's sister. Not content with covering the countryside in an icy blanket, she has also kidnapped Rupert's friends. Bingo, Edward Trunk, Algy and Badger Bill have all been frozen solid and are being held captive in the Ice Castle. Rupert must go to the Ice Castle to defrost them. The only way he can unfreeze his woodland chums is by giving them an ice pill.

Before setting out, Rupert can choose how many ice pills to take with him — up to eight are available — and select which of the three levels to attempt. Rupert has to climb the ramparts and jump onto icy ridges to try and return his friends to the land of the living.

Apart from the bitter cold inside the Ice Palace, Rupert also has to contend with the traps that Jenny Frost has set to try and trick him into becoming like his frozen friends. Contact with the nasties in the game — which include falling icicles, a helicopter and a car — robs Rupert one of his precious ice pills. Once all his pills have been used up, Rupert is turned into a block of ice.

The game is over when each level has been completed and all of Rupert's friends have pottered back to Nutwood for a hot cup of cocoa in front of a roaring fire.

CRITICISM

● " **This is a very jolly game. The multi-coloured Rupert is nice, but it causes clashes which rather spoil the otherwise attractive graphics. The game is nicely packaged, and BUG BYTE have made a good job of the game, though the instructions are a bit on the short side.** Rupert and the Ice Castle **is certainly nothing amazingly mega-brill, but it's still a good game.** "

● " *Well this is certainly a step up from the last Rupert game. It is a lot more playable and addictive for a start and it's much easier to get into. The graphics are, on the whole, good. The characters are well designed, move around smoothly and even look like the comic book characters. The backgrounds are very well detailed but the sound is a little disappointing. There are a few spot effects but no tune. Generally, I am quite impressed with this one as it has great addictive qualities and it is very compelling.* "

● " I can remember seeing Rupert on television ages ago, and he certainly didn't live in an Ice Palace then. He must be climbing the social ladder. The graphics are well coloured and detailed. Attribute clashes are kept to a minimum, usually with a single coloured background. Sound is very poor — I couldn't hear any beeps anywhere — and the keyboard control is very unresponsive. I really didn't like the game much, even though I'm Rupert's biggest fan. "



COMMENTS

Control keys: O left, P right, A pick up, Z jump
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair
Keyboard play: unresponsive
Use of colour: colourful but without attribute clashes
Graphics: finely detailed
Sound: a few spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: 12
General rating: A pretty platform game

Use of computer	54%
Graphics	47%
Playability	47%
Getting started	55%
Addictive qualities	47%
Value for money	54%
Overall	**50%**

GOLD RUN

Producer: Macsen
Retail Price: **£9.95**

Gold Run is the successor to the game *Blockbusters*, both based on the popular TV quiz series for teenagers in which Sixth Forms and Technical Colleges compete against each other to win some very impressive prizes.

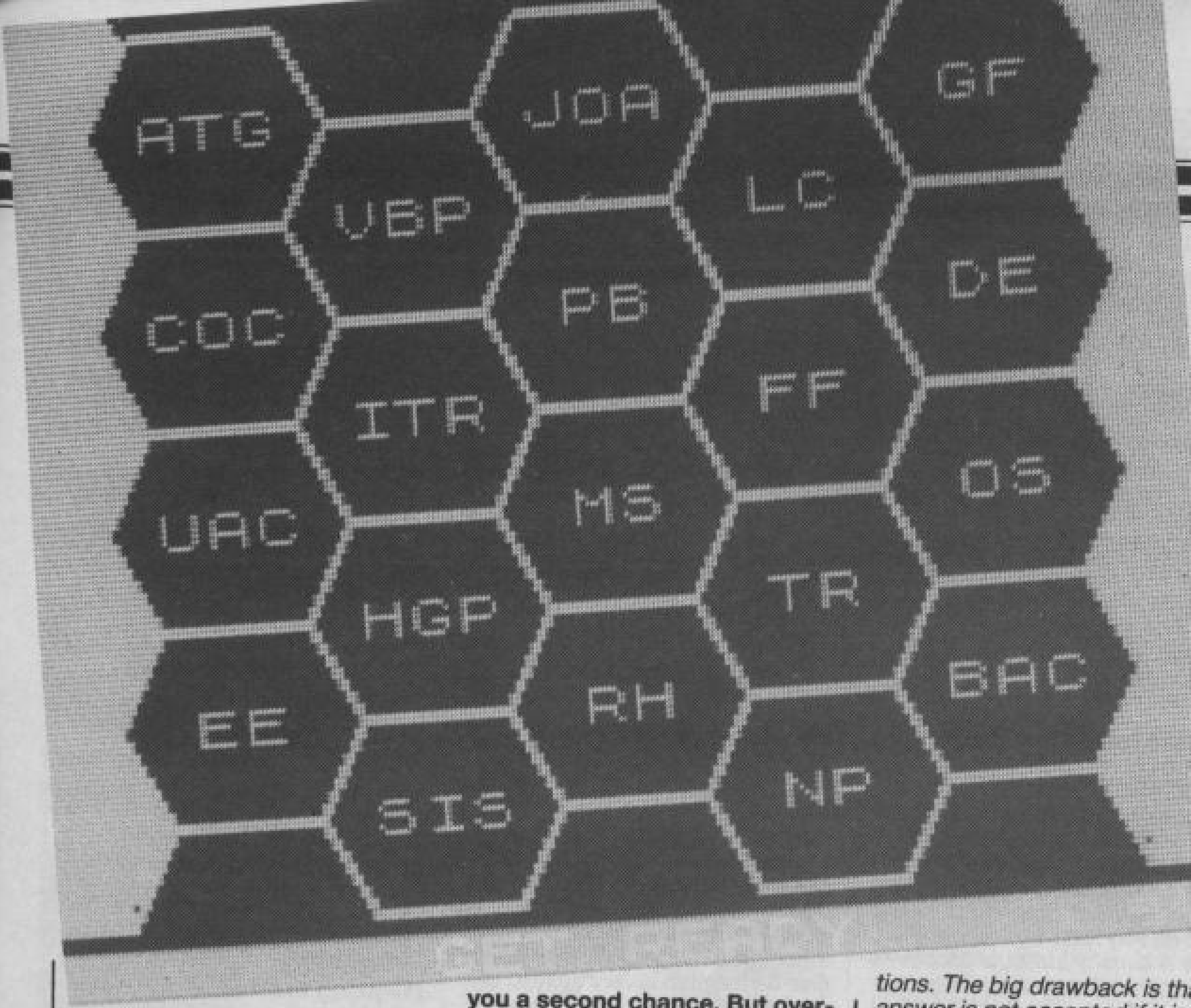
In the television programme, after a team has completed a round successfully, one member is invited to stand on the Hot Spot and take part in the Gold Run. In this section of the game a player has to complete a horizontal path across the set of hexagons by correctly answering a number of questions. In the grid are a number of five shapes each containing the initial letters of a phrase or popular string of words. The Player selects the initial letter of the hexagon which he or she wants to answer questions on, and the question then appears at the bottom of the screen. For example, the initial letters might be N.S and the question would follow: 'Another name for the Aurora Borealis' the answer should then be typed in — 'Northern Lights'. If an answer is wrong the hexagon goes black, but if the question is answered correctly it goes yellow and the player can progress to the next hexagon in a logical route across the board.

Spelling and punctuation all count against you in the Spectrum version if you make a mistake, but generally, if a question is correct but mis-spelt then you do get a second chance to answer it. Although the questions tend to remain at the same level, the time limit in which you must complete the game goes down each time. On the first level this is 236 seconds, but at level nine it is only 38 seconds, so fast and accurate typing as well as a smart brain are necessary. After each game has been completed, the highest score so far compared with your own effort is shown. There is also the option to restart the game or continue in the series.

Unfortunately, there are no mega prizes to be won in this version of *Gold Run*, not a Blockbusters sweatshirt in sight, and no effervescent Bob Holness presenting!

CRITICISM

● " **MACSEN should start up their own TV company, I'm sure it would be cheaper than buying the rights to all the games that**



they publish. If you buy it to complement Blockbusters **(which I presume you're supposed to) I think you'll be a bit disappointed. This is because it's exactly the same as** Blockbusters **and even more boring. The sound is an improvement on** Blockbusters **but is still the same old repetitive tune. The game features some good touches, like the interrupt facility and spelling checker which gives you a second chance. But overall, the game is very poor and one of the worst MACSEN games so far. "**

● *" Technically,* Gold Run *is rubbish. Funnily enough though, it has an element of playability in it, and when played in a group, it lasts a long time. The obvious problem is that questions crop up again and again, but* **MACSEN** *have made a reasonable job of avoiding this, by providing a large dollop of questions. The big drawback is that an answer is not accepted if it is misspelt. Meanwhile, time is ticking away, and you're not going to beat the record . . . argh!* Gold Run *isn't a mega game, by any standard, and its high price acts in a strong way against it, but I reckon its not a bad game. "*

● " This is the sort of game that I give to my hated cousins in Skegness because it is completely boring. I used to believe that gameshow computer games could be fun if you played them in a group but I've tried with this one and it isn't. The sound effects are adequate but I feel that there should be more of them to give the game a bit more atmosphere. The game responds slowly to keyboard input so typing things in can feel like a punishment rather than entertainment. The game itself isn't really presented well enough to represent a challenge so this game just about fails to please or impress me on all counts. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: any and all
Joystick: n/a
Keyboard play: slow
Use of colour: the same as the TV game
Graphics: ditto
Sound: adequate
Skill levels: nine
Screens: one
General rating: weak

Use of computer	40%
Graphics	17%
Playability	36%
Getting started	38%
Addictive qualities	33%
Value for money	32%
Overall	35%

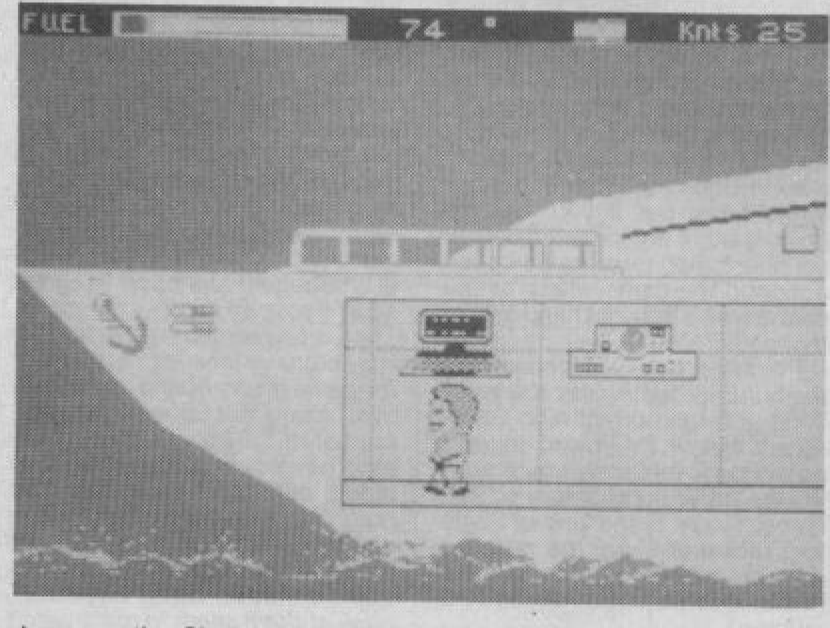
ATLANTIC CHALLENGER

Producer: Virgin
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Millside Software**

On 29th June this year, Richard Branson and the Virgin Atlantic Challenge Team broke the record for the fastest crossing of the Atlantic by sea. Now there's a game based on the trip, so you can have a go at setting a new record and even win the Blue Riband for yourself.

The game stars Richard Branson but in this case he's going solo as there's no crew to assist him. Richard must scamper around the ship whenever the onboard computer alerts him to a hazard in his path, a fault in the ship's engines and so on. But before Mr Branson can even contemplate any potential problems during his voyage he must make sure that everything is ship shape so that he can begin his trip.

Scamper up to the cockpit and start the engines. Not too slow or your fuel will run out before you can rendezvous with the refuelling tanker, and not too fast or else Atlantic Challenger will break up. The voyage is split into three



stages as the Challenger cannot carry enough fuel to get across the Atlantic in one go. The position of each refuelling tanker is shown in the radar room, along with the bearing and number of miles between you and the fuel. Once you have the bearing of the next tanker, you can scamper back up to the cockpit and set the Challenger on course. Once Atlantic Challenger is within 100 miles of the tanker, it shows up on the radar screen, and you drive by sight rather than autopilot. Aim the boat at the tanker and re-fuelling takes place automatically.

The screen shows a cut away section of the interior of Atlantic Challenger covering two screens. The rooms in the boat contain equipment which is used via a window system. To use a facility, stand Richard in front of it and press the fire button. This opens the window option onto the screen. When you've finished with say, the Telex machine, another press of fire returns control to the main game.

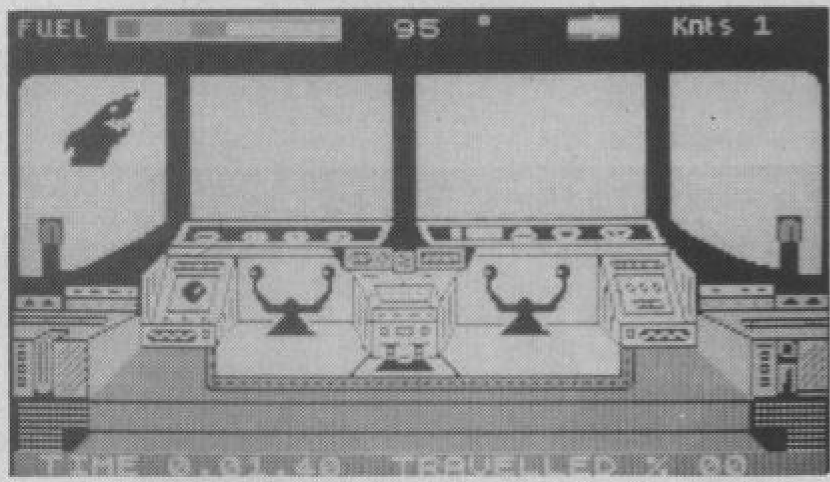
Mr Branson is a very busy man who makes a lot of money. Just because he's battling across the Atlantic, doesn't mean he can ignore his business empire. The telex machine continually informs him about various deals in progress, and you must decide whether or not to accept them. Huge amounts of money can either be won or lost this way.

Apart from the boat, Mr Branson must be refuelled — Richard must eat quite large amounts of food to keep his stamina up for the grueling voyage. If you neglect to keep him fed, his performance begins to suffer and he can't scamper around so quickly. To put some food in Mr Branson's tummy, he must be positioned by the galley window: a press of fire delivers the grub.

In the map room the ideal course which Atlantic Challenger should be taking is shown, along with the three re-fuelling tankers. The engine room shows the stress factors, temperature and the speed in knots. If the engine gets overheated or any of the levels get too high then the boat breaks up and sinks.

Mr Branson can fail in his bid to ▶

break the Blue Riband record in several ways: he can starve to death, crash the boat or rupture the engines. If the boat sinks, it's time to 'Bring out the Branson' — he always escapes intact and is rescued by a waiting helicopter.



CRITICISM

● **" I can't say I'm enthralled by this game. Quite frankly, its boring, and for the price, it can only be described as a rip-off. At first, the little caricature of R. Branson is quite good, but soon, going through all the same actions, steering the ship, receiving telexes, and all the rest of it gets tedious. Playability is fair to start with, but as it gets more and more repetitive, it loses that and also any addictiveness it might have had. Reasonable graphics, but the game isn't worth a fraction of its price. "**

● *" Yawn!* The Virgin Atlantic Challenge *game is a real waste of time and your money. Just running around changing your bearing and speed, eating, and making the odd executive decision isn't really my idea of fun. Graphically, this one is a bit on the poor side. Your character is a nicely detailed, jolly caricature of Richard Branson but your ship is very dull and undetailed; there are many attribute problems too. The sound is also pretty useless — there are very few spot effects and no tune or engine noise. Generally, I don't recommend this one as it is highly over priced and unplayable. "*

● " Lovely graphics on *Atlantic Challenger* but the game is very boring. At first *Atlantic Challenger* proves quite interesting; and waiting for the telex to give you the option to buy certain things is good fun but after a while you soon suss out what to buy. Everything else on the ship is very easy to use and requires no skill at all. The obstacles that appear in the way scarcely vary and are all very easy to avoid. The graphic of Richard Branson is very accurate and looks very jolly all the time — even if you starve him to death! *VAC* contains very little to keep anyone interested, and is far too expensive. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: I left, P right, 1 up, A down, SPACE to fire
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: no problems
Use of colour: okay
Graphics: neat caricature, and some good details
Sound: none to speak of!
Skill levels: one
Screens: 3 main screens
General rating: Not a terribly exciting or entertaining simulation

Use of computer	53%
Graphics	60%
Playability	55%
Getting started	60%
Addictive qualities	47%
Value for money	45%
Overall	**48%**

SBUGETTI JUNCTION

Producer: Bug Byte
Retail Price: **£2.50**
Author: **Muraya**

Sbugetti junction is a game of skill and judgement starring a put-upon traffic policeman. Louigi Pepperoni is a trainee traffic cop on loan from sunny Italy to find out how the British manage to have less accidents on their roads than their hot-blooded companions in Rome. Although Louigi has had quite a bit of training, his performance is still a bit shaky. Now in Britain to further his training, he's been turned loose on an unsuspecting public to direct the traffic in a busy street.

Louigi has to get large numbers of vehicles through certain junctions safety and without any unsightly pile-ups. If he manages to pass the tests set him, he can progress to the next junction and so on until he is a fully fledged traffic policeman who knows what he's doing. Once Louigi has achieved this status he can return home to Italy and become reunited with his voluptuous wife, Fettucinee.

Louigi directs the traffic by way of a number of hand signals which you control by pressing the relevant keys. Each section of traffic has to be properly co-ordinated and each vehicle sent where it's supposed to go. Miscalculation in this area causes large accidents and Louigi's life may also be in danger from a mis-directed car. It's not just the continentals who get hot under the collar and shout a lot when driving. According to *Sbugetti Junction*, the British can get quite stroppy too. If Louigi keeps the lines of cars waiting too long then he'll be in for a bit of aggro . . .

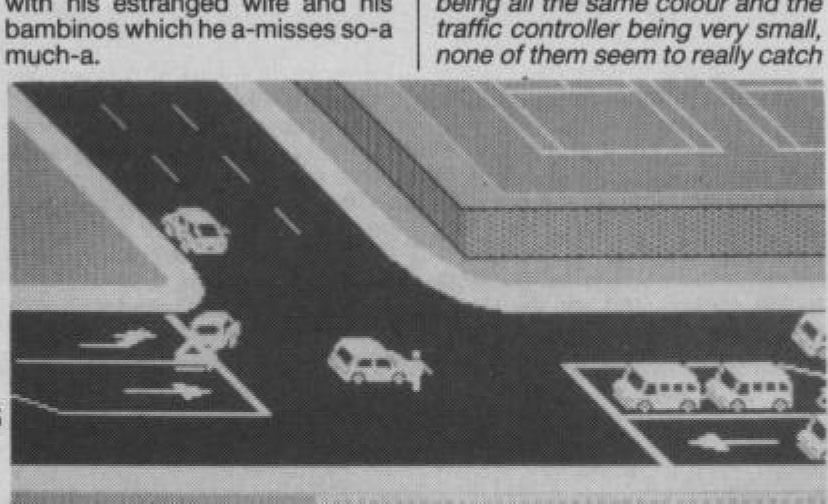
The game is played against the clock. Louigi has five minutes in which to complete each junction. If the cars are kept waiting then they start to beep him, and if they beep Louigi too much for too long them the game-a is-a prematurely-a terminated, or as we say in English, it's curtains for Louigi.

There are three levels to the game. Louigi can choose whether he wants to direct light, heavy, or if he's feeling particularly ambitious, rush hour traffic. Louigi is actually over in Britain to learn about our traffic rules, but if you feel like doing a bit of traffic controlling au continent, then there's a European option in the game where all the cars drive on the right hand side of the road.

Points are awarded for cars correctly navigated across the junctions with the current high Score shown below for you to try and beat. Please try to help Louigi control the traffic successfully so that he can return to the land of Pasta and motzerella, and be reunited with his estranged wife and his bambinos which he a-misses so-a much-a.

● **" Hmmm. I'm not at all impressed with this one. One game was enough to tell me that it won't appeal to anyone. The graphics are shoddy and small, but some of them are nicely detailed. The use of colour is a little garish but there are only a few attribute problems. The game plays very slowly and it is hard to amass high scores on the lower levels so it gets very very monotonous after a short time. Controlling your man is not as easy as it could be — in fact for the first few goes it is almost impossible. After a while it does get a little easier, though, as does the whole game. Even with its cheapo price tag I wouldn't recommend this game. "**

● " Sbugetti Junction *is great apart from one thing — the game. The loading screen is great and the inlay pictures look impressive, but the game is very boring and repetitive. I found that* Sbugetti Junction *consisted of two junctions; one easy and one impossible: this didn't help matters at all. The graphics are very neatly and clearly drawn but, due to them being all the same colour and the traffic controller being very small, none of them seem to really catch the eye. I also had some suspicions about the legality of the hand signals that the traffic would obey.* Sbugetti Junction *is certainly original, but whether you would come back to the game after a few months is very unlikely. "*



● " If you've always wanted to be a traffic cop, then I reckon *Sbugetti Junction* will completely revert you. If this is a real portrayal of a traffic policeman's day, then I'm suprised that any still exist! This game is, in a word, boring. Even in the 'rush hour' mode, there is very little to keep the eyelids open, and even less to keep you playing. Despite reasonable graphics, a passable tune, and even an acceptable amount of playability, *Sbugetti Junction* is one game that I will certainly not be coming back to, because I know that within five minutes, I'll have switched it off. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: no problems
Use of colour: simple
Graphics: nothing wonderful
Sound: tune on title screen
Skill levels: three
Screens: two viewpoints — British and European
General rating: An interesting idea, but an uncompelling game

Use of computer	48%
Graphics	41%
Playability	35%
Getting started	44%
Addictive qualities	30%
Value for money	35%
Overall	**34%**

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TUJAD

Producer: Ariolasoft
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Andrew Green**
Jeff Phillips

Something is wrong with Tujad, a sophisticated Control Computer. One of its circuits has blown, making it behave in a most anti-social manner. Instead of controlling the Security Systems in the complex, Tujad has turned them against everyone, making the place a virtual No Mans Land. The only hope left is to send in Gen 19, the most efficient Combat Droid ever created. Hopefully it will be able to repair the broken circuit in Tujad, as the other maintenance workers can't get within a stone's throw of the complex without attracting hoards of nasty security droids, all lusting after their blood.

This mission is slightly different for Gen 19 — it has to fight its own kind; fellow machines. In other circumstances, Gen 19 would find no problems in performing tasks set for it to complete, such is its programming. This time, however it's machine versus machine and a whole army of security droids are at Tujad's command. These droids are programmed to do only one thing — KILL INTRUDERS!

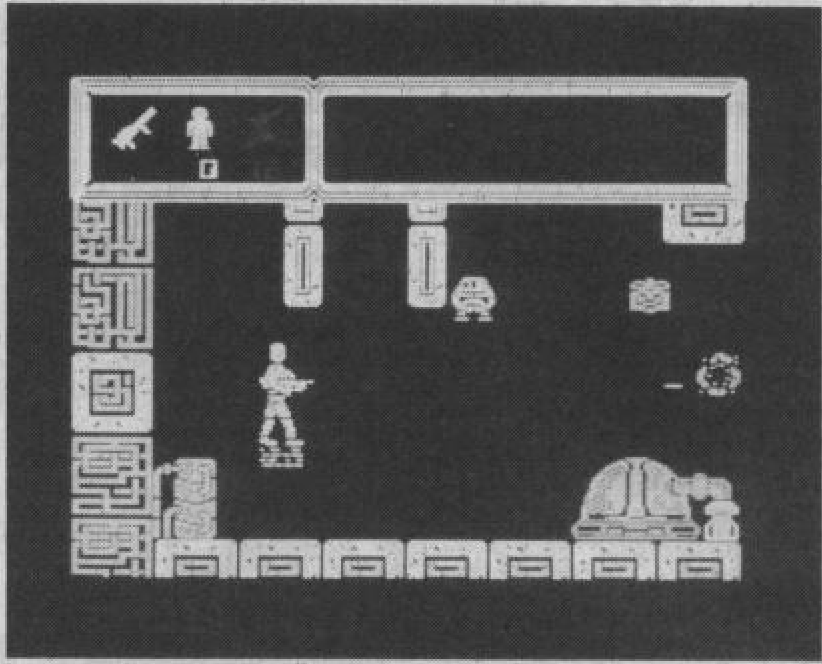
The only way that Tujad can be brought under control is by locating 50 new parts of the circuit and replacing the old ones. These can be found around the 100 rooms of the complex and Gen 19 collects circuit boards by simply walking into them. The circuits are then displayed automatically on the main circuit board so that the player can see how many sections have been found so far.

The biggest problem which Gen 19 has to overcome, predictably enough, is the problem posed by the Security Droids — the complex is absolutely crawling with them. At the beginning of the game Gen 19 has three lives, and these can be lost in two ways. Gen 19's energy depreciates with every encounter with the security nasties in the building and when the energy meter reaches zero the hapless droid loses a life. Some of the larger security droids are instantly lethal. These kill Gen 19 with a single touch and can't be destroyed with the conventional laser like the other droid minions.

Gen 19 has three weapons in its arsenal. Three missiles, three grenades, unlimited blasting on the laser and 3 alien destroyers are available. Obviously, this collection of weapons is not going to last very long when you're up against some of the most sophisticated security droids ever invented. Luckily enough, Gen 19 can top up the weapons store by collecting replacement ammunition along the way.

To save undue wear on the old footplates as a result of legging it around, Gen 19 has been supplied with a hover platform which is very useful for travelling upwards or over any undesirables and makes the robot very manoeuverable. When Gen 19 reaches solid ground, the floating platform automatically retracts and and it's back to traditional footwork. Lifts link pairs of locations in the complex, and represent hand shortcuts.

The status area shows how many of each type of weapon Gen 19 has left in his arsenal, and weapons are selected by flipping through the inventory. A robot figure indicates the number of lives Gen 19 has left, while a lightning bolt shows the amount of energy left in the battery pack. If this is looking particularly low, extra energy can be collected around the complex to give the heroic droid an extra lease of life in the battle against the Security droids and the schizophrenic Tujad.



Gen 19 romps along on his skyriding surfboard, avoiding the nasties and aiming to fix that mean ol' computer.

SUMMER SANTA

Producer: Alpha Omega
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **John Hopper**

Santa's got it all a bit wrong this year. Off he goes to deliver the Christmas presents to all the boys and girls. Trudge, trudge trudge. Down all the chimneys, into the grates, to give the gifts to all good children, which is strange because it's the middle of summer. And there isn't a reindeer in sight!

Perhaps it's something to do with the seasonal mix-up, but poor old Father Christmas is encountering all sorts of problems as he does his rounds. He must collect the presents from the fairy grotto and safely deliver the goodies without waking up the children. However, one of the houses he visits is rather odd to say the least. While the kiddies are tucked up snugly in bed, the house comes to life. Everyday objects like coffee percolators and saucepans have taken on a life on their own and do their best to terrorise Santa. China wall ducks are suddenly animated and the wine cellar hosts all manner of nasty spooks who evidently have a predilection for homebrew.

Apart from these supernatural hassles, there's the more traditional problem of trying not to wake the wee ones from their slumbers. As every boy and girl knows, if they wake up while Father Christmas is doing his yearly round then they won't get any presents. Santa, therefore, has to creep around the house making sure the kiddies stay in the land of dreams. However, the grown-ups don't go to bed so early on Christmas Eve and Daddy's still pottering around in the living room, probably waiting for the yearly rehash of appalling black and white films to come on the television. Santa must sneak around him making sure he isn't spotted.

To add to his difficulties, Santa isn't terribly well organised this year. Without his trusty red nosed reindeers to help him, he can only carry one present at a time. So after each gift has been safely deposited in the correct stocking, he has to tramp back to the grotto to get the next one. Quite apart from that, the various sinister nasties in the house are far from harmless. If Santa brushes against these moving objects then he loses a life. He is kindly provided with five lives at the start of the game, but they are quickly lost as he tries to navigate the unfriendly welcome from the pet dogs on the roof and the rolling footballs in the bedroom.

There is one bonus in Santa's favour. He gets to drink an awful lot of sherry that people have left out for him — the more he drinks the more points he gets. Father Christmas also gains points for every present safely delivered and a percentage of the game completed is shown at the bottom of the screen. There's a demo mode to show the player the bare ropes of the game, which also provides an opportunity to have a sneak peak at some of the locations.

Santa comes down the chimney with another goodie. Let's hope no-one sees him!



CRITICISM

● **" Oh well, they can't all be good, can they? They don't have to be as bad as this though!** Summer Santa**? Even the title is stupid. The game is even worse!**

CRITICISM

●" **I must confess that I didn't expect much from this, after seeing the ORPHEUS logo on the loading screen, which brought back nightmares of** The Young Ones. **Though not nearly as bad as That Game,** Tujad **isn't the most thrilling game I've ever come across; for one thing, it's too easy, with extra men and weapons liberally splashed all over the place. The graphics are prettily animated, but the whole quality of the sprites seems to lack polish. Owing to its easiness, I don't think** Tujad **is particularly addictive, despite a reasonable level of playability. Not a bad game, but one let down a bit by its lack of originality, and its rather boring style. "**

●" *Tujad is a real improvement on the last game written by* ORPHEUS*and definitely worth a twiddle at. I found the game quite attractive at first, but after a few games it became apparent that there wasn't much to it at all. Any competent arcade player would get far in the game with no trouble at all. The graphics and animation are well up to scratch and very attractive to look at. I found that the game was just a case of remembering where everything was: once mapped the game is too simple to last long in anyone's tape recorder. "*

●" There isn't really anything here that I haven't seen before. Even so, all its little qualities have been put together in such a way as to make the game, as a whole, very playable. The graphics are nicely done, the characters range from fairly large to small and the backgrounds interesting but some of the use of colour is a little suspect. The sound is awful — there is no tune and only two different effects. The game is fun to play for a short while but I can see it being much too easy to complete. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q-P up, A-L down, Z, X, C left, B, N, M, right, SPACE change weapons, ENTER pause, 1-0 fire
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: pretty
Graphics: neatly done
Sound: spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: 100 ish
General rating: Not a bad game, but nothing spectacular

Use of computer	**69%**
Graphics	**80%**
Playability	**79%**
Getting started	**81%**
Addictive qualities	**67%**
Value for money	**64%**
Overall	**69%**

Awful, flickery, badly animated, clashing, un-proportioned graphics, a nerve-wracking, unrythmic tune, and a total lack of playability and/or addictive qualities. This game is truly a new low in Spectrum software. I might have said buy it for a laugh, but it's just not funny. Don't look out for it. "

● " *Another typical budget game. Funny name, stupid story line, lots of colour and an attempt at a tune — that just about explains* Summer Santa. *The graphics are too large and are made up of characters — which means you are controlling lots of character spaces and not the usual block of pixels — resulting in appalling error detection. The sound is a very feeble effort at trying to make a Christmas-like tune.* Summer Santa *was impossible to play seriously due to the possibility of ending up stuck in a wall every time you jumped.* ALPHA OMEGA *seem to have excelled themselves in the art of a 'typical' budget game and, as a result, they've produced a load of trash. "*

● " Well it's the middle of summer (or so they tell us) and somebody's released a game all about the best bit of winter. Depressing ain't it? This is a piece of below average budget software that really doesn't appeal to me. The graphics are poor, the characters are large but too richly coloured so there is lots of colour clash and a fair bit of flicker too. The sound is truly awful. There are a few poor spot effects during the game and a terrible tune which plays throughout the game. Fortunately, there's a sound on/off option so it isn't too torturous. On the whole, this game is not fun to play so I wouldn't really recommend it. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable
Joystick: any
Keyboard play: average
Use of colour: poor
Graphics: uninspired
Sound: basic
Skill levels: one
Screens: lots
General rating: Well below average, even for a budget game

Use of computer	**35%**
Graphics	**28%**
Playability	**29%**
Getting started	**40%**
Addictive qualities	**23%**
Value for money	**24%**
Overall	**31%**



MERMAID MADNESS

Producer: Electric Dreams
Retail Price: **£9.99**
Author: **Richard Kay**

Myrtle the Mermaid is in love, poor girl. To make matters worse the object of her infatuation, Gormless Gordon, is terrified of her. And who wouldn't be? She's a buxom wench to say the least. Gordon, on the other hand, is a bit of a beanpole who doesn't know when he's on to a good thing. Little does he realise that he hasn't enough oxygen to stay below the surface of the water for too long. Only Myrtle can save him!

The game starts at the quayside with Myrtle in desperate pursuit. Gordon, replete with snorkel, flippers and all, plunges into the clear blue water and is immediately lost from sight. But Myrtle is determined not to let him escape and dives in after him, her two legs transmogrified into a fishy tail as soon as she hits the briny.

The water is deceptively inviting. Sticks of dynamite which have been ignited, threaten to explode at any moment. In addition, sharks, swordfish, piranhas, jellyfish and sundry other seaside nasties patrol the waters, taking great chunks out of Myrtle's flesh whenever she bumps into them. Too many encounters and her only life is lost, leaving poor old Gordon doomed to die.

Fortunately, she can continually revitalize herself by quaffing the bottles of stout that lie scattered on the rocks below the surface. These, along with other items, are part of the cargo of a shipwreck impaled on the rocks. The amount of energy she has at any particular time is indicated by a stout bottle in the top right hand corner of the screen. As her energy is spent, the velvet black liquid in the bottle gets lower and lower.

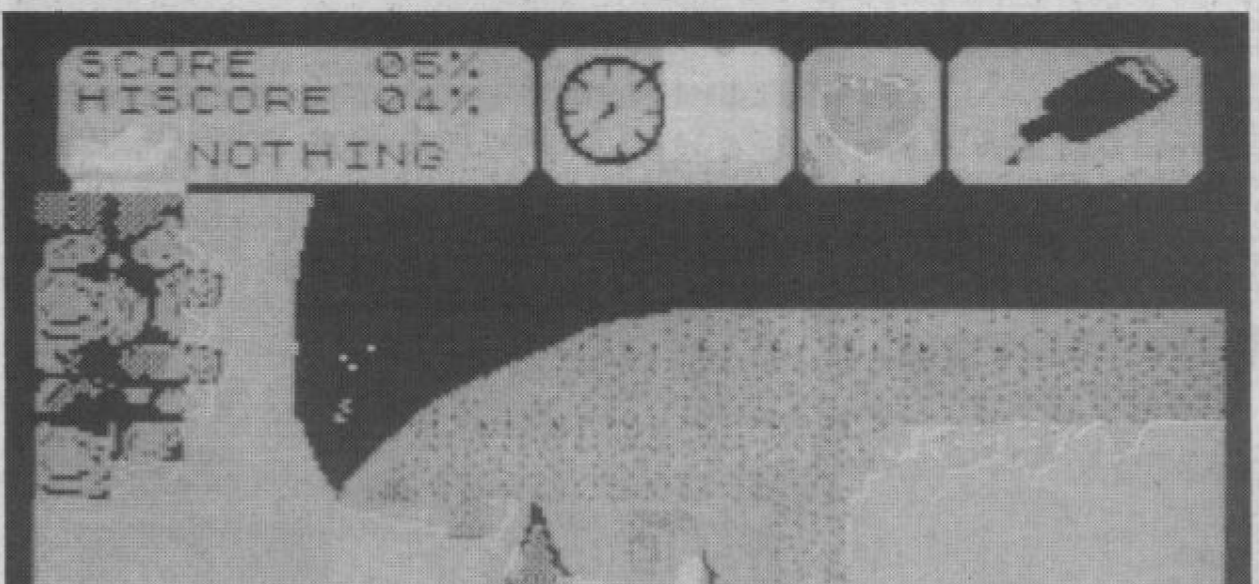
Swimming past the shipwreck, Myrtle explores an underwater maze which appears to have no exit. Along the way, she comes across various items which she may find useful such as anchors, a tyre and a lamp. If she picks up the lamp, she can see her way through the murky caverns where her lovely Gordon might be lurking.

A pulsating heart, at the top of the screen, begins to pulsate all the more when she gets closer to him. Should she fail in her mission, then the heart, not surprisingly, breaks in two and crumble into dust. But if Myrtle does get close to her beloved, this does not always mean she can rescue him. At times, the rocks can form an effective barrier.

In her search, Myrtle discovers an underwater city, a la Atlantis, with its statues of strange Gods, the awesome remnants of a lost civilisation. But she cannot tarry there too long for the pointer on the meter, also at the top of the screen, is slowly moving. If it should reach the red zone, then all is lost. Fortunately, there are a number of air bottles scattered about which Myrtle can take to her loved one.

This game is a race against time with only Cupid and stout on your side. Can you avoid the numerous nasties and get to the luckless Gordon before his air supply runs out ? Let's hope you're a good swimmer!

Myrtle has locate Gormless Gordon but can she get to him? If only she hadn't eaten so much candy. . . .



CRITICISM

● **" The instructions for** Mermaid Madness **are fab: very witty and jolly, and informative, too. The game isn't quite as good. The graphics are very big, and Myrtle's boobs are a good example of the animation. Colour is a bit over-extravagant, because, though it makes the game more attractive, initially, the sprites soon start clashing, and that spoils the whole effect. The storyline is good and the game is fun to play; but though it's addictive, I can't help thinking that SOFT DESIGN could have done a little better with this one. "**

● *" Crikey! What a strange game we have here. The whole of the sea bottom is beautifully covered with lots of fishy nasties. The characters are all very large and well detailed — especially Myrtle, who is extremely well-adorned. Although the presentation is very good, I found that some characters suffered from a terrible flicker. Quite often I found that the whole game crashed if I turned up in the wrong part of the scenery when changing screens.* Mermaid Madness *is lots of fun, but unless you can make that breakthrough in the game then I'm afraid you may be disappointed. "*

● " The only really appealing thing about this game is **Mark Eyles**' intro on the cover of the game: everything else is trite. The gameplay is slow and boring and your energy goes very quickly so high scores are quite hard to get. The graphics are poor and there are many attribute problems which really start to get on your nerves. The characters are large, undetailed and garish in colour, and the backgrounds are uninteresting. The sound is also below average — there are some spot effects during the game and a trashy tune on the title screen. I can't really recommend this one as it is, on the whole, poorly finished. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: A left, S right, FULL STOP down, SPACE collect or drop objects, drink bottles of stout
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: fairly responsive
Use of colour: colourful but attribute clashes and flicker
Graphics: large
Sound: below average
Skill levels: one
Screens: 30
General rating: A colourful game with a jolly story but not very polished

Use of computer	62%
Graphics	68%
Playability	65%
Getting started	65%
Addictive qualities	66%
Value for money	41%
Overall	**66%**

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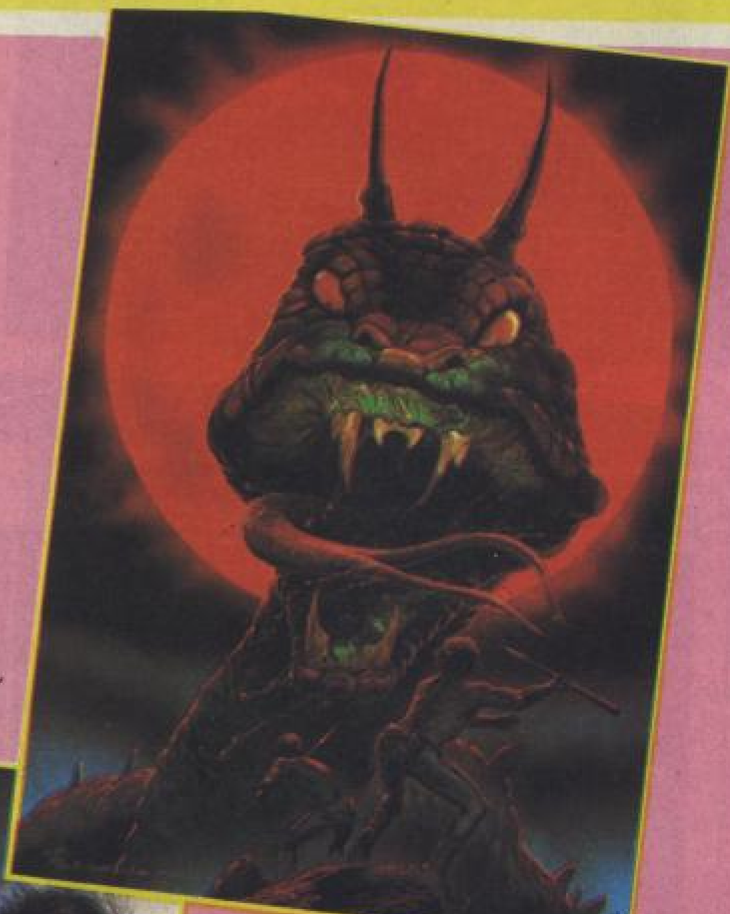
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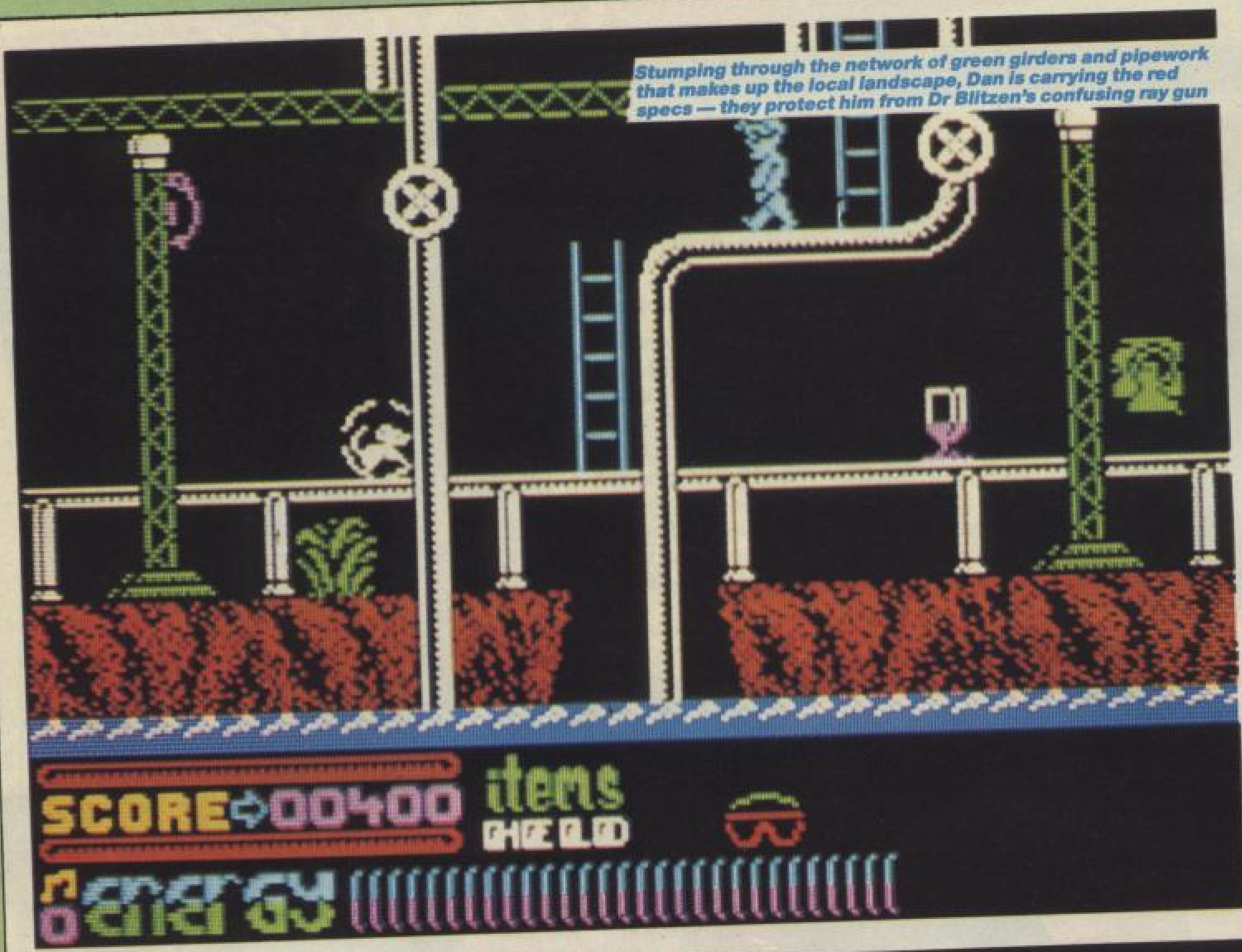
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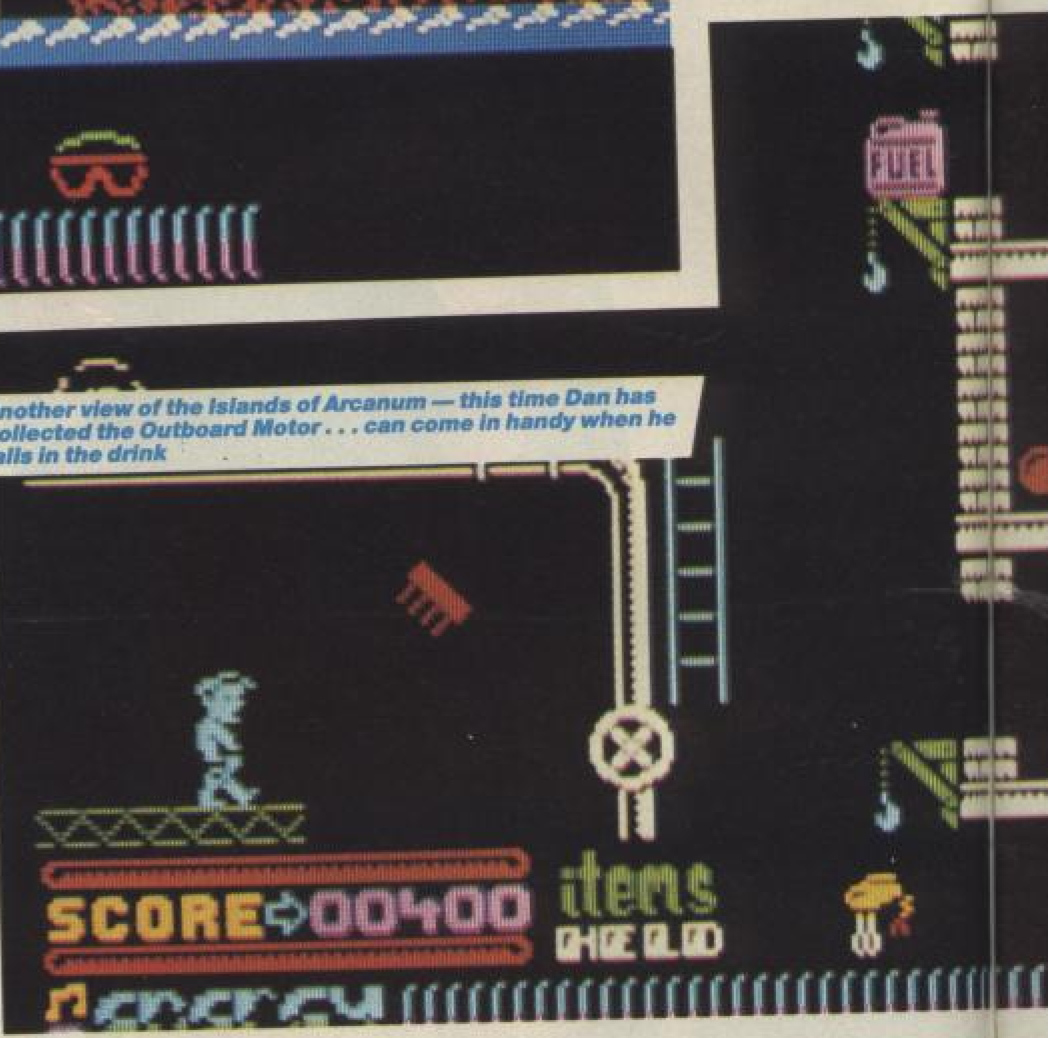
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Stumping through the network of green girders and pipework that makes up the local landscape, Dan is carrying the red specs — they protect him from Dr Blitzen's confusing ray gun



Another view of the Islands of Arcanum — this time Dan has collected the Outboard Motor . . . can come in handy when he falls in the drink



Special Agent (Dynamite) Dan prepares to land on one of the Islands of Arcanum in his quest to foil the mind-sapping plot of Dr Blitzen



Producer: Mirrorsoft
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Rod Bowkett**

·N·A·M·I·T·E D·A·N II

DR BLITZEN AND THE ISLANDS OF ARCANUM

Dr Blitzen is back with a vengeance! He has set up his headquarters in a group of eight islands — The Islands of Arcanum — and once again, he has laid dastardly plans for world domination. His latest idea is to destroy the youth of the world by planting subliminal sound waves in pop records. Unaware of the deadly threat Dr Blitzen poses, teenagers listen to their favourite stars on vinyl, unaware of the threat they pose! As the pop fans listen their minds are gradually destroyed, and soon Dr Blitzen will be in control.





CRITICISM

" I really hated Dynamite Dan so I was a little dubious when I was given the sequel to review. Happily, this is a completely different game from its 'parent'. The first thing that you notice are the brilliant sound effects and tunettes — the game is crammed with them. Playing the game is surprisingly easy, so you get a sense of achievement which spurs you on. The graphics are excellent; the characters are large and well animated and the backgrounds are colourful and full of detail. I really enjoyed playing Dynamite Dan II, as it is very playable and addictive. I strongly recommend it to everyone. "

Luckily, Dynamite Dan is on hand to confront his old enemy and save the world. His main task is to locate Blitzen's secret hideout, find the record pressing plant where the mind-sapping singles are made, and destroy it. All eight islands that make up Arcanum have to be explored before the password that gives access to the pressing plant can be assembled. A record and a jukebox has been placed on each island, and when the record has been found, playing it on the jukebox reveals part of the code. Then it's time to refuel the airship and move on to the next island.

The first island is a maze-like network of pipes, ladders and iron girders, all brightly coloured. Dan climbs up and down the ladders or leaps off girders in the search for the record and the jukebox, which have to be found as quickly as possible. Yes, it's a platform game in the mould of the original . . .

Of course, nothing is ever as easy as it sounds. As you make your way round each island there are hosts of nasties out to get in your way. Some are robotic, others monster-like, others spectral. Each of them moves in a different way and at a different speed. You must either jump over them or simply avoid them — whichever is easiest. They all sap energy on contact, and a bar at the bottom of the screen shows Dan's energy level. Some nasties have a small dose of kleptomania and rob Dan of the useful objects that he has collected. White sprites steal bombs, while magenta nasties steal fuel which comes in magenta cans.

Then, of course, there's the deadly Dr Blitzen himself who is is keen to zap Dan at every opportunity with his mesmeric psychon ray gun. A touch of this and you have difficulty controlling Dan — so beware! Dr Blitzen looks every bit the mad professor with long wispy hair and dark sun glasses to hide his eyes. He dashes about on his mini-hovercraft, blasting away with this MP ray gun.

CRITICISM

" Hey, Dan is just soooo cool, he really is!; happily scampering around these meanie infested islands without flinching. This is a very worthy successor to the original game, and actually improves on a lot of the features. No longer do Dan's lives disappear at a high rate of knots — this time an energy bar replaces the lives system and it can be topped up. A great game which will appeal to fans of the original and to newcomers alike. "

Your score so far is shown at the foot of the screen, along with the objects Dan has collected on his travels. Look out for bowls of fruit, oversized cherries and grapes, and cups of tea — they all revitalise the energy bar when Dan walks over them. Bombs are scattered around the islands, and these can be used to blast your way through barriers, giving access to different parts of the landscape. A set of large red-rimmed goggles protect Dan from the mesmeric powers of the evil Blitzen's ray gun, and cans of fuel must be collected to refuel the blimp so Dan can escape to another island. There are mystery objects on the islands, which disappear from the game when the blimp takes off . . . so find them before leaving! Each island contains a secret passageway, though access to it depends on having the appropriate object. Be careful, however, not to fall into the sea. You might not float!

CRITICISM

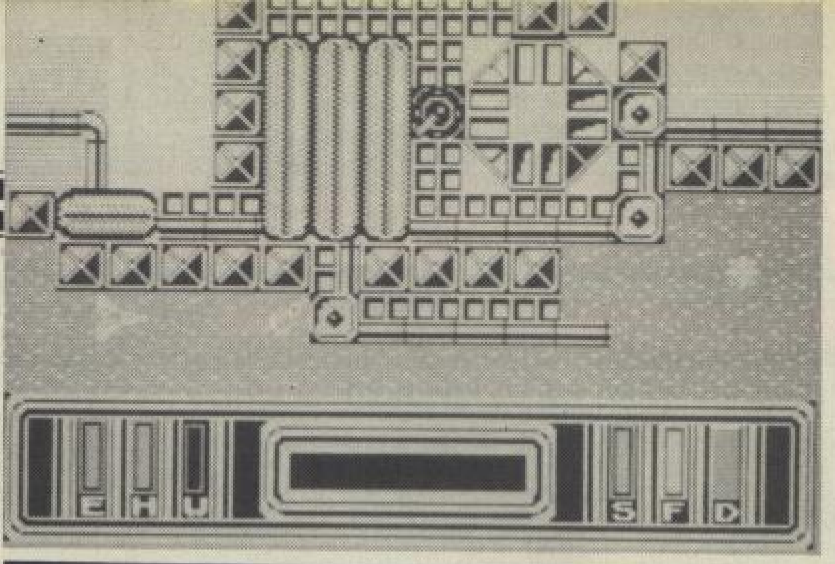
" DDII certainly is one of the most polished arcade adventures around at the moment. It contains nearly everything that you should expect to find in such a game, with colourful and neatly drawn graphics — and minimal colour clash. The game plays some nice tunes, not all of them sound very convincing, but the beeps are very cleverly arranged. Lots of thinking and planning out of routes is required. All the characters are very individual in their movements which results in a very addictive and playable game. DDII is fun to play — a great follow up, and superb value for money. "

Once you've collected the eight elements of the password and gained access to the pressing plant, it's time to plant a bomb and beat a hasty retreat — Dan has three minutes to get back to the airship. But it's a long journey and Dynamite has only one life. The future of pop music, never mind the mental health of mankind, is in your hands.

COMMENTS

Control keys: A, D, G, J, L left, S, F, H, K, ENTER right, W, R, Y, I down, Bottom Row up/jump
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: very bright and cheerful
Graphics: fun and detailed
Sound: excellent tunes and effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: 200
General rating: A very worthy successor to *Dynamite Dan I*!

Use of computer	93%
Graphics	93%
Playability	94%
Getting started	91%
Addictive qualities	93%
Value for money	92%
Overall	**93%**



Another view of the interface between the rogue landmass and the water planet surface of Xarqon

XARQ

Producer: Electric Dreams
Retail Price: **£9.99**
Author: **Simon Dunstan and Nick Cook**

The planet Xarqon consists entirely of seas and oceans with no natural land masses at all. Many years ago the United Planets Co-operative set up a project known as the Self Build Base. The object of this project was to build artificial land masses in the oceans of Xarqon in order to make the planet a profitable acquisition.

However, after thirty years of successful operation the land mass called Xarq has developed a serious fault. Why this has happened, no-one knows, but it has switched itself into automatic Cleansing Mode. Power in the Central Reactor is gradually being built up. As the levels get ominously high, the authorities realise the energy is being stored up in preparation for Planet Cleansing during which the whole of the surface of Xarqon will be burnt to a crisp and generally scoured to the core.

Naturally, the United Planets Co-operative is getting a bit panicky about this impending disaster, as over thirty years of construction and research hangs in the balance. If Xarq is successful in its spring cleaning campaign, the whole project will have to be started from scratch — if there is any planet left to play with. You have been selected to stop Xarq destroying itself. Armed with an impressive array of weapons you begin to journey towards Xarq on a Nik Nik Hi-Speed Hydraboat . . .

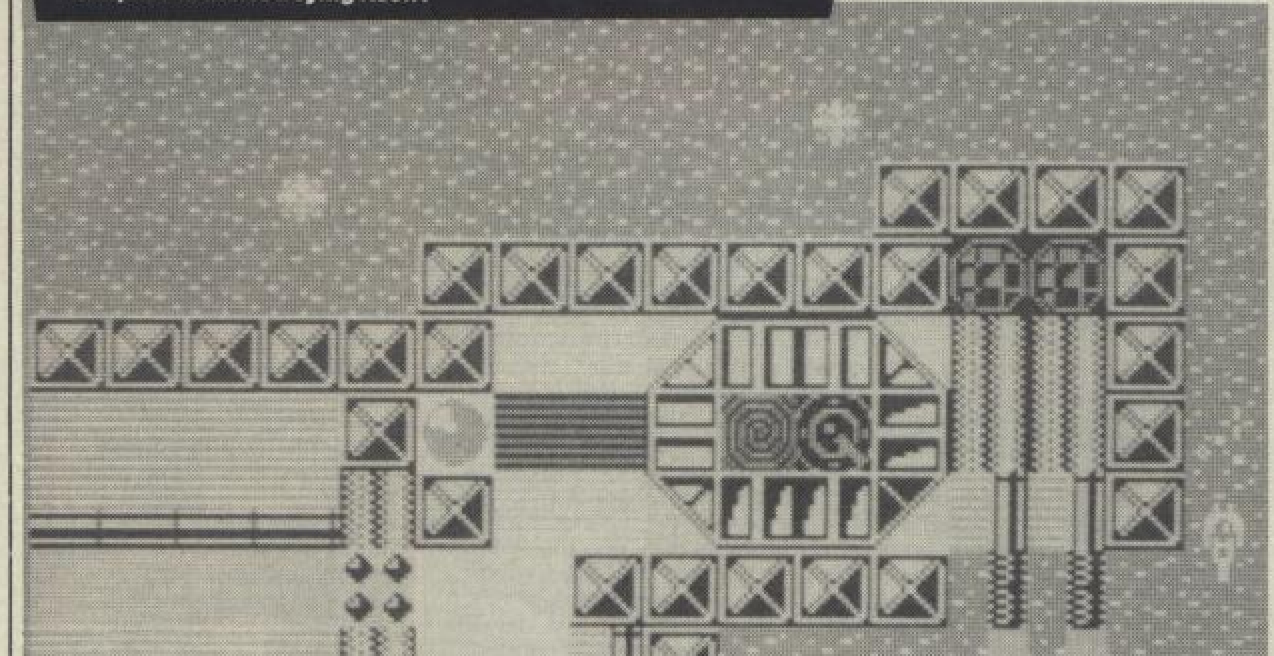
The object of your mission is not an easy one. You must penetrate the Xarq complex so that you can actually drive your Hydraboat inside. This is possible only by accurate blasting of the lock gates, which results in the flooding of the Zimmerman Trenches located around the Central Reactor and allows you to use your Hydraboat. Once the trenches have been flooded you can begin to plan how you are going to destroy the reactor and stop the destruction of the planet.

Xarq is fully committed to the Cleansing Mode and is a bit miffed that someone is trying to thwart its efforts. All Security Defence systems have been fully operated, and Xarq itself does all it can to thwart your mission., Your Hydraboat has been equipped with a simple but effective laser which is ideal for blasting some of the smaller problems in the game, but for some of the more persistent nasties you may need to use your guided missiles or the mortars. Depth charges have been supplied to help fend off marauding submarines which lurk in the murky depths waiting to attack from below. Submarines can be located by their distinctive bleeps on the sonar scanner.

A chart at the bottom of the screen keeps track of your status: damage to the hull, engines and protective shields is recorded on bar readouts, and the stock of weapons and fuel in the hydraboat is also shown. The water depth bar is also handy. Naturally, your mission fails if status levels get too low.

The Hydraboat is capable of reaching great speeds and has been designed to be highly manoeuverable. With one key you can select the direction in which you want to travel; then, by using the acceleration or deceleration key the desired speed can be achieved. Beacons are dotted around Xarq and can be recognised by their colour: blue and white beacons are pumping stations; green and black beacons are laser field generators while purple and black beacons reveal power fields, capable of generating currents of a million Tesla.

Zooming along beside the land mass — can you stop the loony complex from destroying itself?



CRITICISM

● " **What a daft name for a game! The game itself isn't any more sensible. The first thing that entered my head when I saw it was** Panzadrome. **Playing doesn't disperse the idea, either. I reckon this game is an aquatic, overpriced rip off of another enjoyable game. I can't say I like this much at all. The graphics are pretty awful (if I remember rightly, that was** Panzadrome's **main drawback), but the game isn't playable, and therefore, unaddictive. Not one I'd recommend, not even to big fans of the game that it is an expensive and poor copy of. "**

● *" After reading the inlay for this game I was enthralled by the plot seemed — on loading, however, my hopes were shattered. Xarq looks a little like* RAMJAM*'s* Panzadrome *but it plays much faster and is a lot more difficult to get into. The graphics are small but well detailed and the characters race around the screen very fast without jerking or flickering. The sound is fair: there is no tune but there are some reasonable spot effects during the game. The thing that I really don't like about XARQis that you have to play it very fast in order to dodge any missiles that may be on your tail. This makes the game very unplayable and hard to follow. "*

● " I immediately thought of *Panzadrome* when I saw *Xarq*, but such thoughts disappeared once I started playing. The graphics are very detailed and colour is used to its full effect in a mainly monochromatic play area. The explosions that take place when you're hit are very life-like and extremely well animated with accompanying sound effects. I found *Xarq* had a nice exterior but was far too hard to play — which made me think I was missing out on a good game. Only graphically a *Panzadrome* rip-off, but the rest of it is very simple. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q accelerate, A decelerate, Z rotate left, X rotate right, C fire, P pause
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: too responsive!
Use of colour: adequate
Graphics: small and detailed
Sound: simplistic
Skill levels: one
Screens: lots, according to ELECTRIC DREAMS!
General rating: A supercharged *Panzadrome* that's bit too fast to be playable

Use of computer	61%
Graphics	66%
Playability	54%
Getting started	59%
Addictive qualities	60%
Value for money	50%
Overall	**59%**


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TOP 30 FOR SEPTEMBER

1 *(9)* QUAZATRON **Hewson**
2 *(4)* BATMAN **Ocean**
3 *(26)* GHOST AND GOBLINS **Elite**
4 *(1)* COMMANDO **Elite**
5 *(3)* BOMBJACK **Elite**
6 *(8)* MATCH DAY **Ocean**
7 *(2)* ELITE **Firebird**
8 *(6)* M.O.V.I.E. **Imagine**
9 *(5)* GREEN BERET **Imagine**
10 *(—)* JACK THE NIPPER **Gremlin Graphics**

Last month we thought that COMMANDO from Elite was an immovable object at the top of the charts. This month sees a new number one with QUAZATRON taking the crown for Hewson. Will it be there next week with GHOSTS AND GOBLINS sproinging a spooky twenty-three places to take the third position? Out with the old and in with the new this month means that SABOTEUR, FAIRLIGHT and ROBIN O' THE WOOD leave to let Gremlin's JACK THE NIPPER nip naughtily into the charts as the niftiest newcomer in the number ten notch.



11 *(7)* SPELLBOUND **Mastertronic**
12 *(13)* PING PONG **Imagine**
13 *(10)* STARSTRIKE II **Realtime Software**
14 *(—)* LORDS OF MIDNIGHT **Beyond**
15 *(19)* HEAVY ON THE MAGICK **Gargoyle Games**
16 *(17)* CYBERUN **Ultimate**
17 *(21)* STARQUAKE **Bubble Bus**
18 *(18)* KNIGHTTYME **Mastertronic**
19 *(24)* PENTAGRAM **Ultimate**
20 *(—)* BOBBY BEARING **The Edge**

21 *(14)* EXPLODING FIST **Melbourne House**
22 *(27)* GUNFRIGHT **Ultimate**
23 *(11)* SPINDIZZY **Electric Dreams**
24 *(29)* TOMAHAWK **Digital Integration**
25 *(15)* WAY OF THE TIGER **Gremlin Graphics**
26 *(16)* BOUNDER **Gremlin Graphics**
27 *(12)* TURBO ESPRIT **Durell**
28 *(23)* BACK TO SKOOL **Microsphere**
29 *(20)* SPY Vs SPY **Beyond**
30 *(28)* HYPERSPORTS **Imagine**

Another Aunt Aggie special jiffybag will soon be winging its way through the postal system. No wind up — the winner's name is Billy Winder and he lives in Chelmsford, so if you're a friend of Billy's and fancy a play of some new software, now is the time to pop around and visit him. No sharing your exclusive CRASH Hats and T Shirts though, or we'll be sending a deadly pair of Doc Martens around to see; Tony Meadwell of Bedford; Asad Malik who's a Yorkshireman; Lee Peleteiro who despite the Mediterranean sounding name lives on the temperate shores of Morecambe and Brian Heath, who lives just beyond Ludlow's gate to the Welsh marshes in Gwent?

The CRASH HOTLINE AND ADVENTURE CHART is Britain's most important popularity chart — for Spectrum Software, at least. The chart depends entirely on your support and we need your votes in order to produce the analysis of who's playing what.

Nowadays, there's only ONE WAY to submit your votes — and that's by post. Towards the back of the magazine, lurking very close to the competition results bit, you'll find a couple of coupons that you can use to send us your votes. If you're really unkeen on cutting up your magazine, you could always use a photocopy, or copy out the details on the forms onto a plain piece of paper.

Whatever you do, get those voting forms in. Every month we draw out a total of ten winning forms after the charts

ADVENTURE TOP 30 CHART



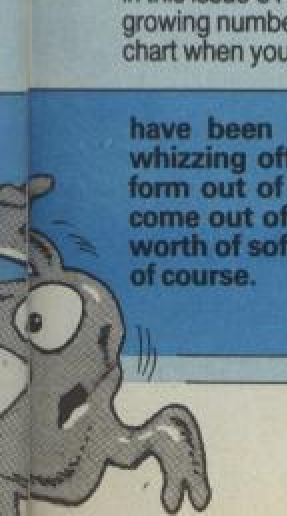
Well, after making the highest new entry at the number twelve slot last month, Gargoyle's HEAVY ON THE MAGICK has made it to the number one position. There is definitely something mystical about magic as the highest new entry this month is THE PRICE OF MAGIK from Level 9 which materialises in the number eight slot. The only other new entry is SEABASE DELTA the adventure from Firebird. Bye bye's this month are said to VALHALLA which popped into the charts for a brief appearance before mysteriously vanishing along with REDHAWK from Melbourne House which probably shows that even superheroes have bad days!

1 *(12)* HEAVY ON THE MAGICK **Gargoyle Games**
2 *(2)* SPELLBOUND **Mastertronic**
3 *(1)* LORD OF THE RINGS **Melbourne House**
4 *(5)* LORDS OF MIDNIGHT **Beyond**
5 *(3)* FAIRLIGHT **The Edge**
6 *(8)* RED MOON **Level 9**
7 *(4)* THE HOBBIT **Melbourne House**
8 *(—)* PRICE OF MAGIK **Level 9**
9 *(14)* KNIGHT TYME **Mastertronic**
10 *(6)* FOURTH PROTOCOL **Century/Hutchinson**

11 *(13)* DOOMDARK'S REVENGE **Beyond**
12 *(16)* BORED OF THE RINGS **Silversoft**
13 *(7)* SWORDS AND SORCERY **PSS**
14 *(9)* MARSPORT **Gargoyle Games**
15 *(11)* DUN DARACH **Gargoyle Games**
16 *(10)* GREMLINS **Adventure International**
17 *(22)* FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD **Ocean**
18 *(21)* SPIDERMAN **Adventure International**
19 *(20)* DRAGONTORC **Hewson**
20 *(—)* WORM IN PARADISE **Level 9**

21 *(29)* THEIR FINEST HOUR **Century**
22 *(26)* EMERALD ISLE **Level 9**
23 *(15)* ROBIN O' THE WOOD **Odin**
24 *(—)* SEABASE DELTA **Firebird**
25 *(17)* SHADOWFIRE **Beyond**
26 *(27)* MINDSHADOW **Activision**
27 *(—)* AVALON **Hewson**
28 *(18)* SHERLOCK **Melbourne House**
29 *(30)* ADRIAN MOLE **Level 9/Mozaic**
30 *(23)* TIR NA NOG **Gargoyle Games**

Caroline Middleton of Sheffield will soon be glued to her Spectrum screen as she plays with this month's forty pounds worth of super software. CRASH Hats and designer T Shirts, as worn by Captain Kidd himself, will be lovingly stuffed into jiffybags and sent to the four lucky runners up in this issue's Hotline draw: Jason Bartlett of Alton; Graham Pugh of Cardiff; Richard Dainty of Wigan and finally, proving that CRASH has a still growing number of female readers, Pamela Sellick of Abingdon. Well done to you all . . . and don't forget to send in your votes for next month's chart when you could find YOUR name adorning these hallowed pages.



have been compiled, five for each chart, and prizes go whizzing off to the lucky senders of those forms. The first form out of the sack of Hotline votes, like the first one to come out of the Adventure voting box, wins its sender £40 worth of software of his or her choice. And a CRASH T Shirt, of course.

The next four voting slips for each chart, that's eight voters in all, win a T Shirt and Cap. Don't miss out on your chance to win all these goodies for the cost of a 17p stamp and the time it takes to put pen and your opinions to paper. CRASH HOTLINE and CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL are what we call the giant boxes that your votes go into, and they can be reached via PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.

WIN A PIRANHA SURVIVAL
A Host Of Fishy Goodies On Offer!

Crash Competition

A Minion's life is not a happy one (as you should all know by now). And I thought last month was bad! This month, that nasty CRASH team have been subjecting me to the usual abuse. There I was, minding my own business, when Hannah *Girlie Tipster Smith and the Doc Marten* Kidd grabbed hold of me. Before I knew where I was, I was dunked in the River Ludd (hence **Lud**low) and expecting to have to fight off a host of ravenous piranhas — I'd heard them talking about Piranhas in the CRASH office that very morning, you see!

''Just teasing'', they said as Tony (the bearded one) placed his foot firmly on my head. I don't know which is worse, drowning or being nibbled to death. Fortunately there aren't any fanged fish in the River Ludd, and I escaped the episode largely unscathed.

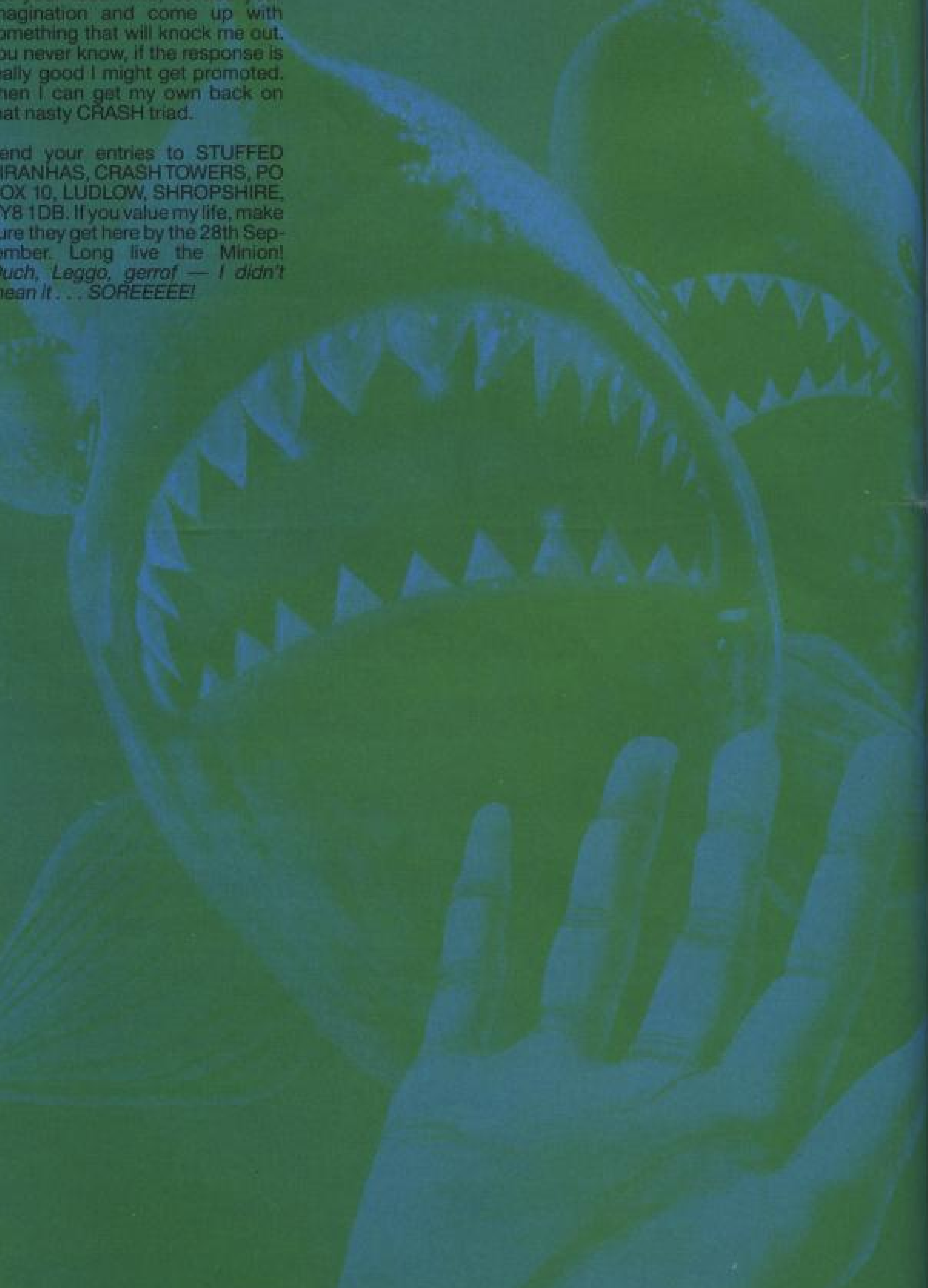
But the indignity didn't end there. No sooner had they got back to CRASH Towers, than the Terrible Trio were onto me again. This time they were a bit more subtle. I thought at first it was something to do with the Ed's Albanian cigarettes (essence of dead dog's entrails) which are currently the talk (and pong) of Newsfield. Disgusting habit, smoking. Then I presumed it was girlie perfume of the highest odour. But I was wrong on both counts. Plunging my worn minion's hands into the depths of my pockets, I pulled out five pungent minnows. What beats me is that they were still alive! Tough things, these fish.

Well, all these fishy goings on leads me on to those fishmongers from PIRANHA, who are offering lots of aquatic goodies for the more imaginative among you. FIRST PRIZE is a PIRANHA survival pack — just what I need. This includes a PIRANHA sweatshirt (to protect you from nefarious nibblies) a cuddly piranha toy (to fend off the other piranhas) and five PIRANHA games from their launch list: *Nosferatu, Rogue Trooper, Strike Force Cobra, Trap Door* and *The Colour of Magic*. And there's more . . .

Five SECOND PRIZEs of a tee shirt, a cuddly piranha and the game of your choice from the five already listed. And for twenty-five RUNNERS UP, there'll be a cuddly piranha and a game, from the five above, of your choice.

Get out your crayons, aerosol spray cans, Rotring drawing pens, oilpaints or whatever, and start work on a mini masterpiece. What you have to do is dream up a minigame that occupies no more than five screens and stars a piranha! Add a brief outline of the action, just a few words to describe the plot. A competition to get your teeth into, so use your imagination and come up with something that will knock me out. You never know, if the response is really good I might get promoted. Then I can get my own back on that nasty CRASH triad.

Send your entries to STUFFED PIRANHAS, CRASH TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB. If you value my life, make sure they get here by the 28th September. Long live the Minion! *Ouch, Leggo, gerrof — I didn't mean it . . . SOREEEEE!*



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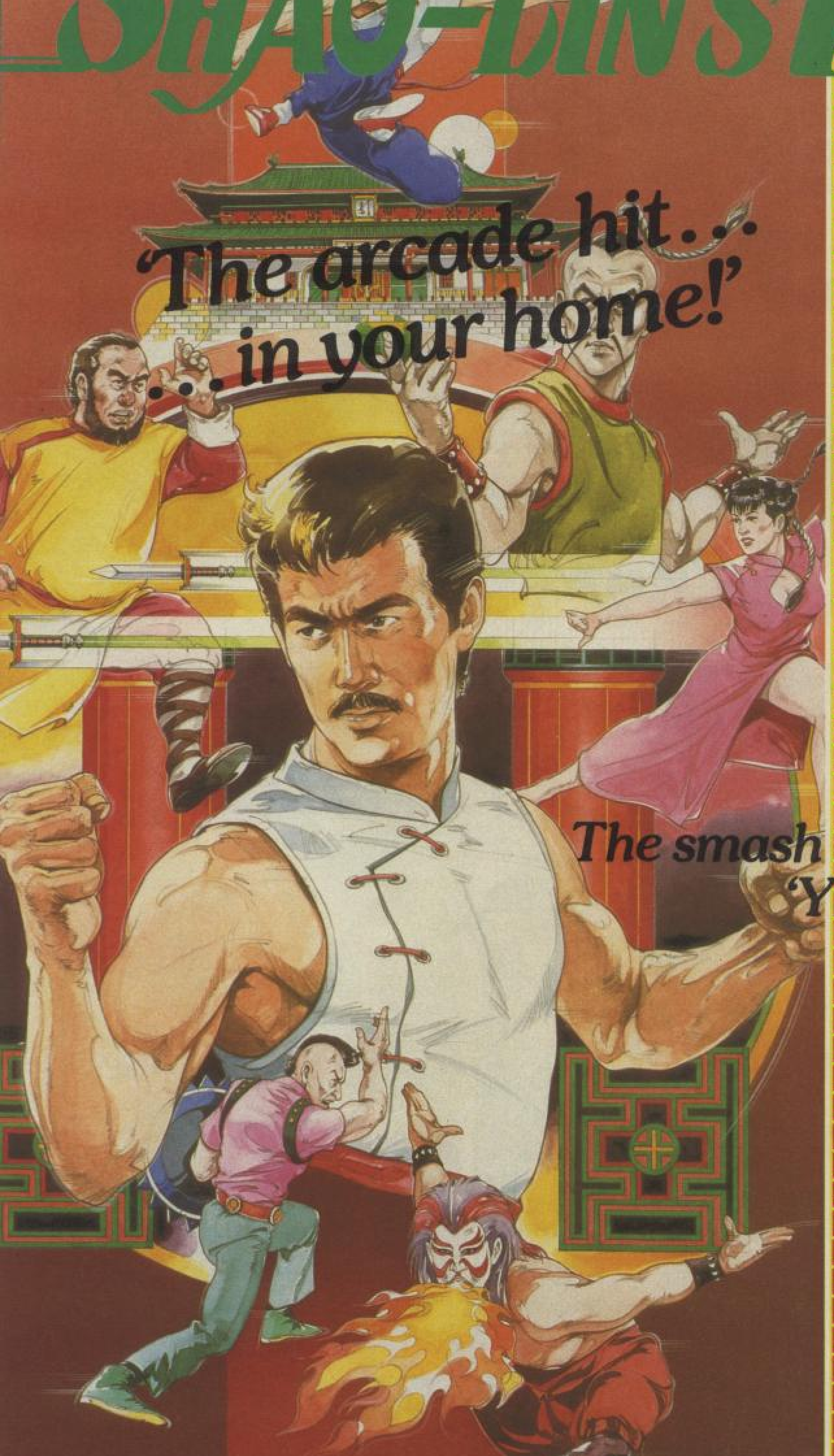
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The smash hit follow up to 'Yie Ar Kung-Fu'

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Our hero has finally mastered the secret martial art "CHIN'S SHAO-LIN" but is trapped by triad gangs. With kicks and other secret powers, escape from and travel SHAO-LIN'S road to freedom!

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LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM

Strange times indeed. Sitting here in early August, sorting through your letters as I begin work on another FORUM, the snow is gently falling on Ludlow! Perhaps the unseasonal weather has something to do with the Russian nuclear disaster. . . . Somehow I doubt we'll all be sunbathing on Christmas Day! I really should remember to pack a raincape in the saddlebag of my bicycle, no matter what time of year it is.

Anyway, on with the FORUM this month — space is short enough as it is, owing to a slight holiday recess, and I've got to persuade the Doc Martened One not to insist I attend the PCW Show . . .

MANGRAMANAGRAM

Dear Lloyd Mangram
I've sussed you Mangram, I was deep in thought counting computer games tapes jumping into cassette recorders, and I had just reached *Make A Chip* and was very nearly asleep. It hit me like a bullet from John Marsh's gun, Mangram had always been a misprint it was really aangram, an anagram of anagram.

'Now', I thought, 'to find an anagram of LLOYD! I found it: Olly'd! The *'d* bit standing for *ver*, hence Ollyver. You are Oliver Frey. As for the spelling it's the proof readers fault. So Lloyd, you and Oliver are the same person.
Admit it!
Francis Irving, Cheadle, Cheshire

Alwyas been a misprint indeed!
LM

STAR LETTER ☆ ☆ ★ ★ ★
CRITICAL LITANY ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Lloyd
Just this minute read your letters, so I thought I'd comment on a few points while they're still fresh in my mind.

1) The ULTIMATE *Pentagram* Shock Horror controversy. Another sucker bites the dust on your letters page. **S Valente** should have known better than to write in like that, surely he must have known what the response would be. But with regard to 3D rotation games, I think they really have gone on for long enough. When I first saw *Knight Lore*, I thought it was excellent, but a month later I was sick and fed up of it. Now, with the plethora of this type of game, I get bored of them in about three days. I mean *Alien 8, MOVIE, Nightshade, Batman, Attack of the Killer Tomatoes, Gunfright* ad nauseum. I can't understand how people's attention can be held for so long by this one type of game.

The same problem occurs with every new type of game (eg the *Gyroscope Marble Madness* craze which I predict is just about to finish, and the karate games) but it does not go on for as long as the 3D walkabout game has. It's interesting to note how when a fighting game comes out now, the reviewers first response is Oh no, not another fighting game, yet this does not seem to happen with the 3D style games. Surely 3D games cannot survive much longer . . .

2) Sexism in computing. This is fast becoming a popular topic. The sexist problem stems from the enormous majority of males in the computing business and anything else to do with computers. It is not helped by individuals such as **Mr Schofield**. No doubt issue 32's letter column will be jam-packed with hordes of outraged bra-burners demanding **Mr Schofield** be burned at the stake.

Role-playing suffers from the same problem of gender. WHITE DWARF's lettercol has the occasional slanging match about portrayal of women as helpless on the covers, as they are usually seen being carried off by a beasty or protected by a Conan lookalike.

On the other hand, you never see letters from males in knitting magazines moaning about lack of attention (or perhaps you do, I can't say I've looked). Anyway, both computing and role-playing are hobbies which are likely to remain male-dominated, so there's not a lot can be done about the problem.

3) Minson. You asked for comments, and I'm afraid I must agree with **Mr Evans**. Mr Minson's articles have become totally predictable, a few free lunches, Mr Minson gets drunk, and wanders to another free lunch with a hangover to get drunk again etc. Mr Minson also takes great delight in sniping at other journalists and making 'witty' comments on the food at his free lunches (they probably just invite him to get rid of the leftovers). Get rid of him, and expand the excellent PBM section.

Pete Tamlyn's (that guy sure gets around) article comparing adventures, gamebooks and RPG's was interesting and objective, something which the opinionated offerings on this subject in the adventure trail most definitely are not.

Anyway, after a mammoth effort of writing almost a page of constructive criticism I'll finish off with some gratuitous slanging: Melissa Ravenflame is a coward and a sexual stereotype of the worst kind. Go get her Hannah (great cover by the way, though I just bet there'll be complaints, eg "Immediately after seeing CRASH my son went out and was smothered to death whilst trying to mud wrestle an alien gorilla").
Philip Coggins, Oldswinford, West Midlands ★ ★ ★ ★

An interesting set of views Philip. Some people argue that there are only four or five basic types of computer game and that everything is either a variation on a theme or a combination of a couple of themes. It's not that surprising that there have been lots of 3D games — a lot of them clones admittedly, but some, like Batman, *add a little more to the genre. As I've said before, it's not what you do with an artistic form, it's how you exploit it.*

Sexism in the computer games world is no doubt a product of the domination of sexist males in the field — which doesn't mean that women should be excluded or referred to as 'bra burners' if they occasionally make a voice of complaint heard.

Quite a few people have written in on the subject of Mr Minson's column, and it seems people either love him or hate him — so far, opinion seems split about 50/50. More letters on that particular subject next month.

Anyway, as a reward for your long epistle of constructive criticism I have decided to award you this month's £20 of software. Try not to ask Aunt Aggie for a knitting program!

128k BLUES

Dear Lloyd
I am a 128K Spectrum owner and, like many others sold my 48K Spectrum to buy it. Right now I am feeling quite depressed about my computer, as about a week after I bought it the price was slashed by forty pounds! Also adding to my dilemma is the fact that Alan Sugar is going to launch a new 128K Spectrum, which could make me lose all hope in what I have just bought, so much so that if Alan Sugar's new 128K Spectrum does hit off with the people, I will definitely be selling my 128K Spectrum to buy the new one. Either I will do that or the 128K Spectrum picks itself up, in quality of games and in popularity. But for the moment I'm afraid the chances are I will be selling my computer, as time is running out for Sir Clive's machine.
Lee Sayers, Sunderland

Which all goes to prove that our esteemed Editor was offering constructive advice in that editorial of his which attracted some criticism. Had you hung on in there a little longer, you would have saved some money! (Can I have that pay rise now, please Graeme?)

Don't worry about Alan Sugar's new 128 — it will be compatible with your machine and could well provide such a boost to the 128 Spectrum world that companies actually start writing games for 128K Spectrums. You shouldn't have to sell your pride and joy Lee.
LM



LOOKING BACK IN ANGER?

Dear Lloyd
As a computer veteran' (ie aged over 18) who spends half his life standing in the dole queue, it has become increasingly apparent to me that the software industry though still entertaining, has lost some of its attractiveness and freshness. The businessmen behind the business are 'progressing' into bureaucrats who speak of 'net profits, units of sale, marketing techniques and prospective themes' rather than 'play our games you'll enjoy them!'

What I'm getting at is that the innocence seems to have evaporated from this once fun field. Either that, or someone has fabricated a well-constructed but now crumbling facade.

I accept that there has to be a business side to any industry but I'm talking about software marketing not car sales or insurance policies. The attitude of shoving the product via advertising down the public's throat (even if we never see it) is typified by one of the true giants of the now-cynical software business: some companies persist in advertising products for ages before their release and the games may be getting more polished while we wait but at the same time, they get tarnished. Do you get the feeling their heart is not in entertaining but in making money?

I don't know whether it is me that has mixed priorities or someone else . . . Contrastingly, people like GARGOYLE GAMES impress me with their fresh approach; they seem to hold a determination as well as an ability to enjoy themselves and make money. Perhaps previously I was so naive and had so many expectations that I was blinded by the more attractive side of the then booming computer industry.

As more and more small companies vanish over the precipice into bankruptcy so larger companies consisting of board-rooms and directors swallow each other up . . . No I'm not some miserable old sod who despises people who are richer than myself, but I thought computers were supposed to be FUN not about capitalising nor opportunism to such a degree.

1982 was a year for entrepreneurs, sadly 1986 is a year for business-men and chartered accountants. In those days (strains of Hovis theme-tune can now be heard) a game was considered a bad deal at £3.95 and it probably was, now £9.95 is accepted as the norm ... inflation? Or have people's wallets fattened? Mine hasn't. Believe it or not I'm not really nostalgic, well only a little.

Brian Gillespi, Old Kilpatrick, Dunbartonshire

Nostalgia, like the game market, ain't what it used to be. Yes, I agree that much of the raw fun element and energy has gone out of computer gaming nowadays, and it is perhaps sad that large businesses have moved into the market.

But the arrival of professional businesses has had a number of positive effects too, Brian. The shady deals of past years have been rendered almost extinct — people will always moan about poor product though, and that's not actually a rip-off, more a case of Caveat Emptor as my mother used to remind me before I spent my pocket money.

In the days when games were sold for under a fiver from the programmer's front room, distributors and retailers didn't have to be paid and advertising budgets were minimal. Without advertising, significant sales of a product — be it a computer game or a fridge — can't be achieved and without significant sales there's not enough profit left to invest in development work.

You must agree that the technical sophistication and game content of Spectrum software has risen dramatically since 1982, and I doubt you'd still be impressed with a £3.95 game today that offered 1982 graphics and playability.

The next correspondents have something to add about the advertising debate . . .

LM

ADVERTS WITHOUT SUBSTANCE

Dear Lloyd
I am writing to complain about the advertising of software in magazines. It's not that I think there are too many adverts, it's the software companies who have millions (!) of adverts all over the place, to promote games that don't exist.

I think that software companies should not be allowed to advertise a game before it is released in the shops. DOMARK managed to do this with their game, *Splitting Images* and the game is still set to be a hit, so if DOMARK can do it why can't OCEAN, ELITE and US GOLD?

Simon Machell, Wallasey, Merseyside

Very valid points, Clive and Simon. Some while ago Roger Bennet, our Advertising Supremo, wrote to all the software houses who buy pages in CRASH asking them to refrain from putting 'Available Now' on their adverts if the game was not in the shops.

The trouble is, last minute delays often creep in, and given that companies have to let us have their advertising copy at least a month before their ad is printed in CRASH, all sorts of things can go wrong with an advertised game's launch schedule while CRASH is being printed

Advertisements are expensive, and I'm sure software houses would like to avoid 'wasting' advertising money, Simon. It's just that we don't live in an ideal world where everything goes according to Plan A! The next correspondent has something to add to the advertising debate. . . .

LM

LOST BUS FARES

Dear Lloyd
I know this subject has been in FORUM many a time before but I have had enough with software houses always advertising their games but when you go down town and go to a good computer store and ask for a game they always say it has not even been published yet! Please, please print advertisements with at least a date of release or I am going to keep losing 24p on bus fare.

Clive Stonebridge, Ipswich, Suffolk

COPYWRITER'S NIGHTMARE

Dear Lloyd
Advertising as it is today is a waste of resources and adds unnecessarily to the fixed costs of producing software. I'm not saying that all advertising is bad, in fact advertising is essential for both the consumer and the firm. People need INFORMATIVE advertising so that they can rationally decide whether or not a particular program suits their tastes and whether it is worth the asking price. This could be done in half a page containing clear screen shots accompanied by a brief but concise explanation of the game, what joysticks it works with and other relevant pieces of information like whether or not it is Microdrive compatible and so on. For monocromatic games (eg *Knight Lore, Bobby Bearing et al*) there need not be any colour. *Black and White ads still work, as long as they are clear (which happens to be the case in CRASH because of the glossy paper used).*

What I object to is the pages of hype that we are faced with when reading computer mags. This PERSUASIVE advertising entices people to make irrational decisions which they very much regret afterwards. Software houses cannot keep conning the consumer who has to pay ten pounds for a lot of garbage which was advertised in two pages of bright colours as being 'the ultimate experience' etc etc.

Firms are now paying the price for this; high fixed costs because of advertising, increases in the levels of piracy, and the growing success of the budget labels. It is time the software houses changed their marketing strategy and used the money they save to reduce the price of software, but maybe it is now too late . . .

Michael Imprato, Golders Green, London


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On the planet Xarqon the deadly silicon and steel fortress of XARQ threatens to destroy all life. You are called up by the United Planets Cooperative to infiltrate the XARQ complex, flood the Zimmerman Trenches and close down the Central Power Reactor.
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One thing's for sure — you'll never get a job with SAATCHI AND SAATCHI *Mike! Advertising has been blamed for a range of society's ills, and it's not surprising to hear that adverts have damaged the software industry.*

As you so rightly say, advertising is an essential part of any industry — but it must be up to the consumer to decide which products to buy. Adverts don't MAKE people buy things, they just let people know that something is available and they are bound to attempt to catch the consumer's eye. Reviews, on the other hand, attempt to offer assistance when it comes to making the purchasing decision, so read the ads and the reviews and at least look, if not try, before you buy.

LM

LONG LIVE HANNAH SMIFF!

Dear Lloyd

I have been reading CRASH since November 1984 (and that is 2 months even before I got my Spectrum!) I am writing about Robin Candy (RIP) leaving. At first I was disappointed at this and I didn't think Hannah Smith would be much but how wrong I was.

In June she printed tips for *Way of the Tiger, Green Beret* and *Spellbound*, then pokes for *Spellbound, Bombjack, Green Beret* and *Starstrike 2*. 'Just a lucky month for me , I thought. As I have a paper round all these games have joined my collection of 80 games.

But again I was proved wrong as the month afterwards (July) she printed tips for *Knight Tyme, Turbo Esprit* and again *Way of the Tiger*. Also pokes for *Turbo Esprit, Batman* and *Bounder* and a map for *Rambo*.

Just one plea how about POKEs tips or maps for *Ghost 'n Goblins* and *Jack the Nipper*, long live Hannah Smith.

Garth O'Mara, Feltham, Middlesex

Glad to hear you like the output of our new 'Girlie Tipster'. I'm not that much of a fortune teller, but I can predict a long life for her as she annoys Graeme Kidd rather than me! Now her predecessor has gone on to other things, my desk space is safe . . .

LM

UNITSOFT'S DEMISE

Dear Mr Mangram

I hope that what I have to say is of some help to poor **Alan Panter** of Wokingham, Berkshire in his letter to you last month's issue.. The company UNITSOFT that he wrote to for cheap software has gone bust, but there might be some help for him if he writes to John Hendry & Co, 3 Lynedoch Street, Glasgow, Scotland. This was the information I got from Popular Computer Weekly dated June 5 — there was a letter and answer on page 10 of this particular issue.

Mr Wong San, Gorleston, Norfolk

Thank you Mr San, and thank you (indirectly) PCW

LM

PHOTOCOPIER PROBLEMS

Dear Lloyd

I am writing this letter concerning CRASH No 30. On page 101 there is a competition for the *Biggles* computer game etc . . . On page 102 there is a competition to win a disk drive. I was keen on both these competitions, so I went ahead and did the *Biggles* one first. I completed the wordsearch, so I got out the scissors and started to cut. I realized I had cut part of the disc drive entry coupon.

Next day I went down to my local library to use the photocopier. This was so I could cut one out and photocopy the other. To my astonishment the lady said it is illegal to photocopy competitions! I left disappointed. I do not know if she was right or not, but this would not happen if CRASH took their time to space the competitions out. The only solution I can think of when comps are on either side of the page is to buy two mags . . .

Gary Ballingall, Dundee, Scotland

Well, buying two copies of CRASH every month would be a nice idea . . .

Seriously, though, we do try and avoid such awkward positioning — but the Artroom boys do slip up from time to time which is understandable given the pressure of work they have to cope with. (Can I come to tea now ART?) I think the librarian was being a bit of a stickler for regulations — we don't mind if you photocopy an entry form and often say as much, because some folks don't like cutting up their copies of the magazine. We only get cross if you photocopy an entry form so you can enter the same competition dozens of times.

LM



BIRTHDAY TREAT

Dear Lloyd

I have been an avid reader of your column since July 1984 when I bought my Spectrum 16K. I then upgraded to 48K. However I have, on average, sent you two letters a month. Yet not one of these letters has been printed in CRASH so please print this letter in time for my 18th birthday.

I have recently bought a Spectrum 128 and was wondering if there were any other 128 owners who would like a pen pal who also owns a 128 so could you print my address please? I have been trying to get a MIDI lead for as synth so could you tell me where I could get hold of this lead?

JA Morrison, The Caretakers House, Westgate Hill School, Westlate Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE4 6NY

Happy Birthday To Yoo, Happy Birthday to Yoooo. Can anyone out there help Mr Morrison?

PRICE PROBLEMS

Dear Lloyd

After reading the letter by Sean Powrie in the July edition of your magazine complaining about Smith's, over pricing their games, I have seen the £1.99 game *Snodgits* by CREATIVE SPARKS priced at £9.95! I don't know what Smiths are trying to pull but if they don't stop doing it they will lose customers to rival stores.

Graham Leech, Carlisle, Cumbria

I've had quite a few letters recently about strange prices appearing on games in the major chain stores — most of them pointing out that games have been overpriced rather than underpriced. I get the impression that people are more likely to write in if they see a game overpriced and tend to buy an underpriced game double quick and not put pen to paper about it.

Large and reputable stores simply can't afford to deliberately overprice products. Mistakes to happen. Why didn't you approach the departmental manager and point out the error as well as write to me Graham?

LM

CASE FOR THE DEFENCE

Dear Lloyd

In the wake of ULTIMATE's recent criticism I thought I would add a few point for the defence. Often the games have been criticised for being alike with different graphics. Taking this approach then surely MIKRO-GEN should be in the firing line for their never ending supply of dashing *Wally* games? 'AH', I hear the prosecution say 'this was a sequel and required a similar plot and the same graphics'. This is so but also the *Sabreman* saga was a line of sequels, a point which is frequently overlooked. In addition why were GARGOYLE not criticised for their games (*Tir Na Nog, Dun Darach*, and lately *Marsport*) when these too could be construed to be the same game with a different scenario and graphics.

Branching from this I would like to ask the prosecution why, when ULTIMATE copy a game idea that was theirs in the first place, other software houses like OCEAN (*Batman*), GARGOYLE (*Sweevo's*), FIREBIRD (*Cylu*), and MASTERTRONIC (*Molecule Man*), receive nothing but praise and not a hint of criticism. The crime of copying an idea which many believe is overplayed, is surely more serious than simply using your own idea.

I do happen to think that ULTIMATE have come to the end of the road with Sabreman, but they were more entitled to repeatedly capitalise from the 3D set up than other software houses.

Peter Whelerton, Normanby, Cleveland

It seems the debate is set to continue. Maybe it's time we had a change of topic, and stopped arguing the case for and against ULTIMATE *until we've all seen their next game. And no, I don't know what the wizards from Ashby de la Zouche have planned . . .*

LM



ALPHA CENTAURIANS NEED NOT APPLY!

Dear Lloyd
I need a Pen-friend who knows how to use machine code. This is because I cannot get the hang of it. I am 14 years of age, and have been using the ZX Spectrum for nearly 3 years. I have had many good ideas for computer games, but have not been able to get what I want out of the computer, even though I have started many a game. I have done this a lot, but can never finish them. I can do many graphics, sounds, and font designs, but they lack a good machine code routine. I will not be able to start straight away on programming as my computer has broken and will be out of action for a while. I don't mind who replies, what sex they are (preferably a boy, or a girl. No aliens from Alpha Centauri please), and any age above 13.

I am also interested in D&D and AD&D games. As well as all that I am a great fan of Airwolf, Star Wars, and Star Trek films.

Ian Capon, 33 Hannah Crescent, South Cerney, Cirencester, Glos GL7 6JG

PEN PAL REQUEST

Dear Crash
I am 18 years of age and French and live in Noisy-le-grand (near Paris). I own a 48K Spectrum and I would like to exchange ideas and routines with British users. If there are people who will correspond with me, please could you give them the address below:

Pentecote Eric, 24 Chemin du bel-air, 93160 Noisy-le-grand, France

128K PLEA

Dear Lloyd
I was recently reading through my old issues of CRASH and noticed in a reply to a letter in the May issue you said that insufficient Spectrum 128s are sold, then there will not be the sales incentive for software houses.

Now in my opinion someone will not buy a computer unless there is a reasonable amount of software available for that machine. In which case the software houses are waiting for an increase in sales of the 128 before they start writing games for it and prospective 128 buyers are waiting for software to be released before they buy one. The result is that the 128, which is a perfectly good machine will eventually be withdrawn from the shelves.

What the 128 needs is for someone to start producing decent amounts of software for it. 'Ah', I hear you say, 'but they won't do that until there are sufficient sales. In reply to that I would like to take you back four years to the release of a computer which we all now know and love, the 48K Spectrum. Was there any software for it? Very little! But people wrote games for it and marketed them and effectively increased demand for the 48K. Now here's a plea to any software house reading this, stop worrying about whether or not a game written for the 128 will make your company a fortune and try to be a bit more pioneering like the early games programmers.

If nothing else it will increase demand, providing that if the game is original and not just an enlarged 48K game. The 128 is a good machine and should not be killed off by businessmen who are worried about their profits. Where are the people who helped make the 48K Spectrum what it is today?

Timothy Reed, Chandlers Ford, Hants

You are quite right, Tim, it's very much a 'Chicken and Egg' situation as far as the 128K machine goes. Maybe the launch of the Spectrum Plus Two will make a difference and achieve enough sale to chivvy software houses into writing programs for the larger machine.

There is one difference about the situation now, as compared to the launch of the 48K (or indeed the 16K machine). In those days, people writing software for the Spectrum didn't have a massive user base of 48K machines to rely on, and had to take the plunge. Today, many of the people who helped make the 48K machine what it is are still busy writing for it, producing games for a certain market. Understandably, they are a bit reluctant to abandon a solid market temporarily while they write for the 128 machine — and don't forget more effort and time has to go into a game which takes advantage of the larger memory and increased facilities of the Spectrum's big brother.

LM

ARMCHAIR SPORTSPERSON

Dear Crash
I have always liked sports simulations. I find them compelling and I think their lasting appeal is much longer than the usual run of the mill games. I still often play such games as *Match Day*, *Match Point*, and *Daley Thompson's Decathlon*, years after they first came out.

Why then are such classics as *Match Day* so underrated? Has the CRASH reviewing team got something against sports games? Why is it that *Match Day* wasn't smashed? It was and indeed still is the best soccer game around. *Match Point* is another example of CRASH'S apparent knock-the-sports-simulations policy.

Even the fantastic *Ping Pong*, one of my most recent software acquisitions, was only just Smashed with 90%. Is the reason for CRASH not liking sports simulations that they think they are gimicky and unoriginal in their concept? If this is true then surely CRASH fell for the biggest gimmick of all in *World Series Baseball*. All the pretty graphics and jingly tunes that were surely the main factors if not the only factors, in winning it the highest acclaim in the pages of CRASH, somewhat hide the fact that the game hasn't got as much lasting appeal as the two *Matches* (*Point* and *Day*), both of which weren't Smashed.

When I first got *Barry McGuigan's Boxing* I thought it was a refreshing change to have a game that had so much depth built into the humble beat 'em up. Having to use strategy and forward planning as well as skill and reflexes, I thought made the perfect blend. Was it a CRASH Smash? Not likely!

Now after all that you probably think that I only play sports simulations and that I am totally biased for them. This is untrue however because in my opinion *Elite* is the best game ever to be made and *Quazatron* is at the moment my favourite game.

So finally, a plea, please, please, please give sports simulations the credit they deserve as I cannot see why such utter rubbish as *Zoids* (which only people at CRASH seem to like) can be rated 10% above the all time Football Classic *Match Day*.

Timothy Wormleighton, Rochdale, Lancashire

We certainly haven't got anything against sports simulations Timothy. Indeed, most of the corpulent members of the CRASH team get no closer to a sports field than their Spectrum screens! But reviewers' (and readers') tastes do differ widely, and we can't keep everyone happy all of the time . . .

As far as Match Day *goes we've already apologised — take a look at the editorial pages for a bit of interesting news applicable to* Match Day *fans. We're hosting a* Match Day *challenge soon, and are inviting readers to pit their on screen footballing skills against the game's programmers!*

LM

TRAITOROUS INTENT!

Dear Lloyd
All Spectrum owners, take a deep breath, count to 3 and read on. Now prepare yourself for a bout of blasphemous burble. I too have been a Spectrum owner for 3 long years: releases such as *Lords of Midnight*, *Shadowfire*, *Lords of Time*, *Fairlight* and *Starquake* have left me breathless to say the least. However I have noticed that recently 3D games have flooded the market (*Fairlight* being the best) and I have become very bored . . . Yawn! . . .

In the last few months there have been two games worthy of a mention. *Zoids* and *Quazatron* (more 3D) otherwise the Spectrum has been left in the dust. C64 owners have been treated to *Uridium*, *The Eidolon*, *Silent Service* and *LCP* Not one iota of similarity between any of them. So I've decided to hang out my Spectrum and join the immortal ranks of the ZZAP! following and buy myself a wonderful Commodore 64 . . .

I have waited too long for the software industry to waken up and rise to new heights on the Spectrum, and as for *Pentagram*, drop dead ULTIMATE!

N Potter, Folkestone, Kent

Goodbye Mr Potter, it was nice knowing you . . . See you in ZZAP!. I'm not sure how many readers will agree with your views, however . . .

LM

NAMEDROPPING

Dear Lloyd
One day, I sneaked into CRASH Towers, the first thing I noticed was a sweet stall where someone was ROBIN' CANDY. I then entered the reviewing room and noticed CAMERON POUNDing the keyboard. Someone was watching him, obviously ROGER KEEN to have a go himself. I then saw GRAEME KIDDing around, with NICK WILD as a tiger. A fight broke out and someone gave DICK a SHINER. (Is CRASH Towers really this chaotic?)

I could see that OLIVER's FREYed temper was running out. Somehow, order was restored, mainly due to the efforts of a delectable young woman. 'I'm CAROL KIN see, I keep the peace'. A strange fellow suddenly introduced himself. 'I'm DEREK-I BREW, stir, and boil the CRASH cooking pot.

Two other fellows were playing Exploding Fist. 'GOODWIN, SIMON' said poor Lloyd after his man had been dropped. 'JON BATES his opponents even quicker', grinned Lloyd, and I was eventually thrown out of the building by DAVID (WESTERN exit).

I couldn't fit your second name into the story Lloyd — your name is hard enough to say, never mind fitting it into the story! And I know Robin has gone now, but I thought I'd put him in anyway, out of respect. What's happened to him anyway? Are his 'PASTURES NEW' really a field at the bottom of his garden?

Jer Nallist

You think MY name is hard to fit into a story, Jer! 'WeLL OY'D better better weigh in, MAN, GRAMs make all the difference when you are on a diet' said Auntie Aggie . . .

Well, it's the best I can do!

LM

And that just about wraps is all up for another wintry summer's day of FORUM compiling. Keep your letters coming in to me at the usual address: LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB. If there's enough correspondence, I might have to spend all September back at base reading through your epistles. . . .

Hannah Smith

PLAYING TIPS



It's pouring with rain outside as I sit here in the damp CRASH office and I think I have a rather nasty cold coming on. Probably all that prancing around in a leotard last month. Coo brings me out in goose-pimples just to think about it. Anyway, I'm now totally prepared for anything that Ravenflame hussey cares to throw at me. Perhaps we'll just battle it out to the death with old copies of C&VG. Chortle. Anyway, I'm not worried. I'm fully expecting a wimp out from her end. Thanks anyway for all the letters of support you've sent me.

Right, as I reach for another kleenex I think it's about time I got on with the tips. Snuffle. There are loads of maps again this month. Peter Roe and Jamie Huggett have sent in maps of *Action Reflex* and *Ghosts and Goblins*. Mark Brown from Highbridge in Somerset contributed a *Bobby Bearing* masterpiece. The *Core* map comes from Ian Hunt from Purley and Chief Cartographer award this month goes to Simon Canfer from Sandwich in Kent for mapping the impossible and coming up with *Cyberun*. Top Tipster this month is Mr Brock from Peterborough for his solution to *Pyracurse*. If you can't get through the game using his hints then you never will!

Hope to see some of you at the PCW show and now on with the tips. Snuffle, snuffle, sniff, sneeze. Sigh.

BATMAN ADAPTATION

Chris (*Jetman*) Turner has been hard at it again this month. After trying the *Batman* POKE sent in by **Jon** *(From Sum Where in Leicestershire)* he thought it would be a wheeze if Batman suddenly turned into a proper Super Hero and had amazingly high leaps as well as the infinite lives given to him by Jon. So here is an adaptation of Jon's routine to make Batman airborne. Also if there are any hackers out there who require any help then Chris will be happy to advise you. You can contact him through me at CRASH (usual address) Please send an SAE to save on his pennies when he replies to you.

```
10 PAPER 0: INK 0: BORDER 0:
CLEAR 65535
20 LET sum=0
30 FOR n=64768 TO 64888
40 READ a
50 POKE n,a
60 LET sum=sum+a
70 NEXT n
80 IF sum<>14739 THEN PRINT
INK 7;"ERROR IN DATA":STOP
90 PRINT AT 10,10;INK 7;
BRIGHT 1; "START TAPE"
100 RANDOMIZE USR 64768
110 DATA 17, 26, 6, 221, 33, 48,
117, 175
120 DATA 61, 55, 205, 86, 5, 243,
48, 240
130 DATA 17, 131, 250, 213, 1, 48,
122, 197
140 DATA 1, 52, 2, 33, 98, 119, 62,
68
150 DATA 50, 109, 119, 62, 250,
50, 112, 119
160 DATA 62, 200, 237, 79, 201,
62, 250, 50
170 DATA 142, 250, 62, 177, 50,
145, 250, 33
180 DATA 177, 250, 17, 177, 249,
122, 1, 38
190 DATA 0, 237, 176, 50, 202,
249, 50, 206
200 DATA 249, 50, 214, 249, 62,
201, 50, 215
210 DATA 249, 205, 177, 249, 33,
93, 253, 34
220 DATA 168, 252, 195, 127, 252,
62, 201, 50
230 DATA 228, 155, 175, 50, 54,
146, 33, 145
240 DATA 146, 54, 62, 35, 54, 12,
33, 138
250 DATA 123, 54, 62, 35, 54, 255,
195, 128
260 DATA 101
```

KNIGHT TYME CHEAT

John Pinkney from Newcastle Upon Tyne has come up with this useful little cheat for *Knight Tyme* on the 48K Spectrum. If you enter the following POKEs before the Randomize User statement then you'll be able to flick through the locations in the game by simply using the control keys. This comes in very handy if you're contemplating making a map or are simply curious to have a sneak preview of screens which you haven't reached yet.

POKE 24584,255: POKE 24585,255: POKE 45322,255: POKE 45323,255: POKE 41456,0: POKE 41457,0

When the game has loaded select the control option (keyboard, joystick and so on). As soon as the game starts go to **DERBY IV** and ask him for help. The game will now appear to crash but continues if you press the fire key. The Commander appears on the screen, but he disappears as the game continues. Next, press the down key and the border begins to flash. The location can now be changed by using the up and down keys and the screens can be flicked through using the left and right keys. When you're satisfied with the location you have chosen, simply press fire and continue. However, you may find that you die from exhaustion for a little while to begin with. These things need practise you know.

PYRACURSE INFINITE LIVES

There's no stopping **Phil Churchyard** when he gets his teeth into some serious hacking. So impressed was he with HEWSON's latest release, *Pyracurse* that he got the game to do some incredible things . . . the less said about that the better!

One of the things he discovered while he was romping his way through the ancient Inca Temple was a routine for Infinite Lives and here it is . . .

```
10 CLEAR 24799
20 PRINT# 1 ; AT 0,6 ; "START
PYRACURSE TAPE"
30 LOAD "" CODE 23296
40 POKE 23325,201: RAN-
DOMIZE USR 23299
50 POKE 33446,201: RAN-
DOMIZE USR 29600
```

There, that was painlessly short wasn't it? Now Daphne, O'Donnell and the rest of the merry band of explorers can romp endlessly looking for Sir Pericles Pemberton-Smythe, and they don't die.

BOUNDER CHEAT

It has come to my attention that the *Bounder* POKE printed a few issue ago was really not all that successful as it messes the screen up a bit and according to my spies makes the game crash on level three. Therefore for any of you who are contemplating doing horrible things to me in revenge, here is the official cheat as supplied by GREMLIN GRAPHICS: type in POKE 23296,12 (ENTER) LOAD "" (ENTER); start the tape and don't touch any keys after loading. When the scrolling message has finished the game pretends to crash, but don't worry because it's only those GREMLIN GRAPHICS people having you on.

When the computer seems to have re-set itself you will notice that instead of saying © **1982 Sinclair Research** it actually says **©1986 Gremlin Graphics**. Ho, Ho. What a jolly little jape.

You will now find that your bouncing ball has infinite lives and there's no messiness to contend with.

BATMAN: THE COMPLETE SOLUTION

Coupled with **Chris Turner's** super-sproingy POKEs for *Batman*, these tips from someone whose address sadly got parted from the letter should get you to the end of the game and into the Batmobile with Robin. Sorry, whoever you are but thanks all the same.

KEY: **(UP)** — up as in through the ceiling; **(DOWN)** — as in through the floor; **up** — up exit on the screen; **down** — down exit on the screen; **Batbit** — pick up batbit; **Batmobile** — pick up a bit of the batmobile.

Right, right, down, Batbit, down, down, Batbit, left, left, left, left, left, up, left, up, Batbit, down, down, down, down, right, down, (UP), Batbit, down, left, down, down, right, right, right, right, Batmobile, up, left, up, up, up, right, right, right, down, left, (UP), right, Batmobile, left, (DOWN), right, up, up, up, left, up, up, left, Batmobile, right, up, left, left, left, left, down, left, left, left, up, up, up, up, up, up, up, up, up, Batmobile, down, down, down, down, right, down, right, right, right, Batmobile, down, (DOWN), (DOWN), right, (DOWN), right, up, left, up, left, (UP), right, down, (batmobile), down, (DOWN), right, down, (DOWN), (DOWN), down, down, left, left, down, down, (batmobile), up, up, right, right, (UP), (UP), (UP), down, (UP), (UP), right, right, down, right, down, down, left, left, left, left, left, up, up, left, left, up, up, left, left, down, down, left, (UP), (UP), down, down, (UP), left, left **JUMP INTO BATMOBILE AND YOU'VE FINISHED THE GAME!**

EQUINOX LEVELS TWO, THREE AND FOUR

Last issue I printed the solution to the first level of *Equinox*. Now that you have the infinite lives POKE (also published last issue) I think that it is only fair to give you the solution for levels two, three and four. Hopefully, a map will follow next month when Cameron embarks on the mammoth task of snapping all the screens separately to help you find your way around the asteroid.

HOW TO COMPLETE LEVEL TWO

1) Get the teleporter credit from room 23
2) Use the lift to get to room 20
3) Pay the teleporter in room 20
4) Teleport to room 30
5) Get the drill from room 29
6) Go to room 31 and enter the lift
7) Exit the lift from the left hand door in room 25
8) Go to room 17 and use the drill to get the teleporter credit
9) Get the dynamite from room 18
10) Go to room 26 and teleport to room 27
11) Use the dynamite to clear the pile of rocks in room 21
12) Get the teleporter credit from room 21
13) Pay teleporter in room 27
14) Get canister from room 16
15) Go to room 27 and teleport back to room 26
16) Go to room 20 and teleport to room 30
17) Dispose of the canister in room 29
18) Go to room 31 and enter the magnetic lift
19) Exit the magnetic lift in room 25 from the door to the right
20) Get the spade
21) Go to room 26 and teleport to room 27
22) Use the spade to clear the pile of green rocks in room 22
23) Get level three pass
24) Go to room 27 and teleport back to room 26
25) Enter the trans-level teleporter in room 23
26) Select level three and exit the trans-level teleporter.

HOW TO COMPLETE LEVEL THREE

1) Get the key from room 35
2) Use the key to open the door in room 45
3) Get the fuse from room 46
4) Go to room 32 and use the fuse to switch off the force field
5) Get the teleporter credit from room 32
6) Go to room 47 and pay the teleporter
7) Teleport to room 34
8) Get the canister from room 34
9) Travel along the conveyor belt and go to room 44
10) Dispose of the cannister in room 44
11) Go to room 47 and teleport to room 34
13) Get level 4 pass from room 37
14) Travel along the conveyor belt and go to room 43
15) Enter the trans-level teleporter and select level 4
16) Exit the trans-level teleporter.

HOW TO COMPLETE LEVEL FOUR

1) Get teleporter credit from room 63
2) Pay the teleporter in room 54
3) Get the teleporter credit from room 62
4) Pay the teleporter in room 54
5) Get the fuse from room 61
6) Go to room 54 and teleport to room 48
7) Go to room 49 and swap the fuse for the drill
8) Go to room 48 and teleport back to room 54
9) Use the drill to open the safe in room 55
10) Get the dynamite
11) Go to room 54 and teleport to room 48
12) Use the dynamite to clear the pile of rocks in room 56
13) Go to room 57 and pay the teleporter
14) Teleport to room 50
15) Get the canister from room 58
16) Travel along the conveyor belt and go to room 49
17) Dispose of the canister in room 49
18) Go to room 57 and teleport to room 50
19) Go to room 51 and use the fuse to switch off the force field
20) Go to room 60 and get the level five pass
21) Travel along all the conveyor belts
22) Go to room 48
23) Teleport back to room 54
24) Go to room 63 and enter the trans-level teleporter

QUAZATRON POKEs

Chris Turner and his alter ego **Chris Jetman** (who also doubles as a wrestling medieval bear so my spies tell me) has been POKEing away at *Quazatron*. Peturbed at the injustice little KLP 2 suffers at the hands of the baddie droids, he has worked out a routine to give the Klepto droid a helping hand. If you're really sure you want to use POKEs sent in by a person with an unhealthy number of alter egos and a prediliction for medieval wrestling bears then go ahead, here it is . . .

```
10 PAPER 0: INK 0: BORDER 0:
CLEAR 0: 65367
20 PRINT AT 10,0; INK 7;
BRIGHT 1; "HACKED BY CHRIS
(JĚTMAN) TURNER"
30 LET t=0
40 FOR g=63000 TO 63061
50 READ a
60 POKE g,a
70 LET t=t+a
80 NEXT g
90 IF t<>3528 THEN PRINT INK
7; "ERROR IN DATA" :STOP
100 LOAD "" CODE : POKE
34149,33 : POKE 34150,24 :
POKE 34151,246
110 RANDOMIZE USR 34058
120 DATA 33, 143, 227, 54, 24, 35,
54, 65
130 DATA 33, 128, 227, 54, 0, 35,
54, 0
140 DATA 35, 54, 0, 35, 54, 0, 35,
54
150 DATA 0, 35, 54, 0, 33, 176,
215, 54
160 DATA 0, 35, 54, 0, 35, 54, 0, 35
170 DATA 54, 0, 35, 54, 0, 35, 54, 0
180 DATA 33, 86, 203, 54, 0, 35,
54, 0
190 DATA 35, 54, 0, 195, 112, 222
```

BOBBY BEARING MINI TIP

If the thought of pushing your relatives all the way home through the dreaded Metaplanes in *Bobby Bearing* fills you with fear and trepidation then fret no more.

Andrew Hall from Tyne and Wear has sent in this little cheat to save on Bobby's shoe leather. When you find a brother, press the cheat (help) key and your brother will disappear and reappear on the brother score board, marked as a cross to indicate that he is safely home again with his family. This means that Bobby doesn't have to negotiate his way back through the maze pushing his brother back home.

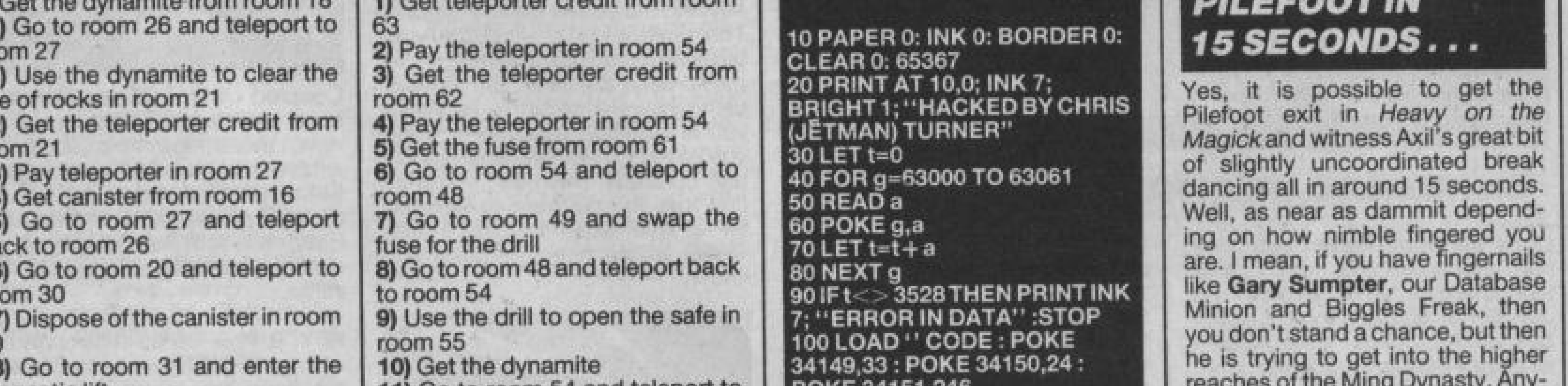
MATCH DAY MINITIP

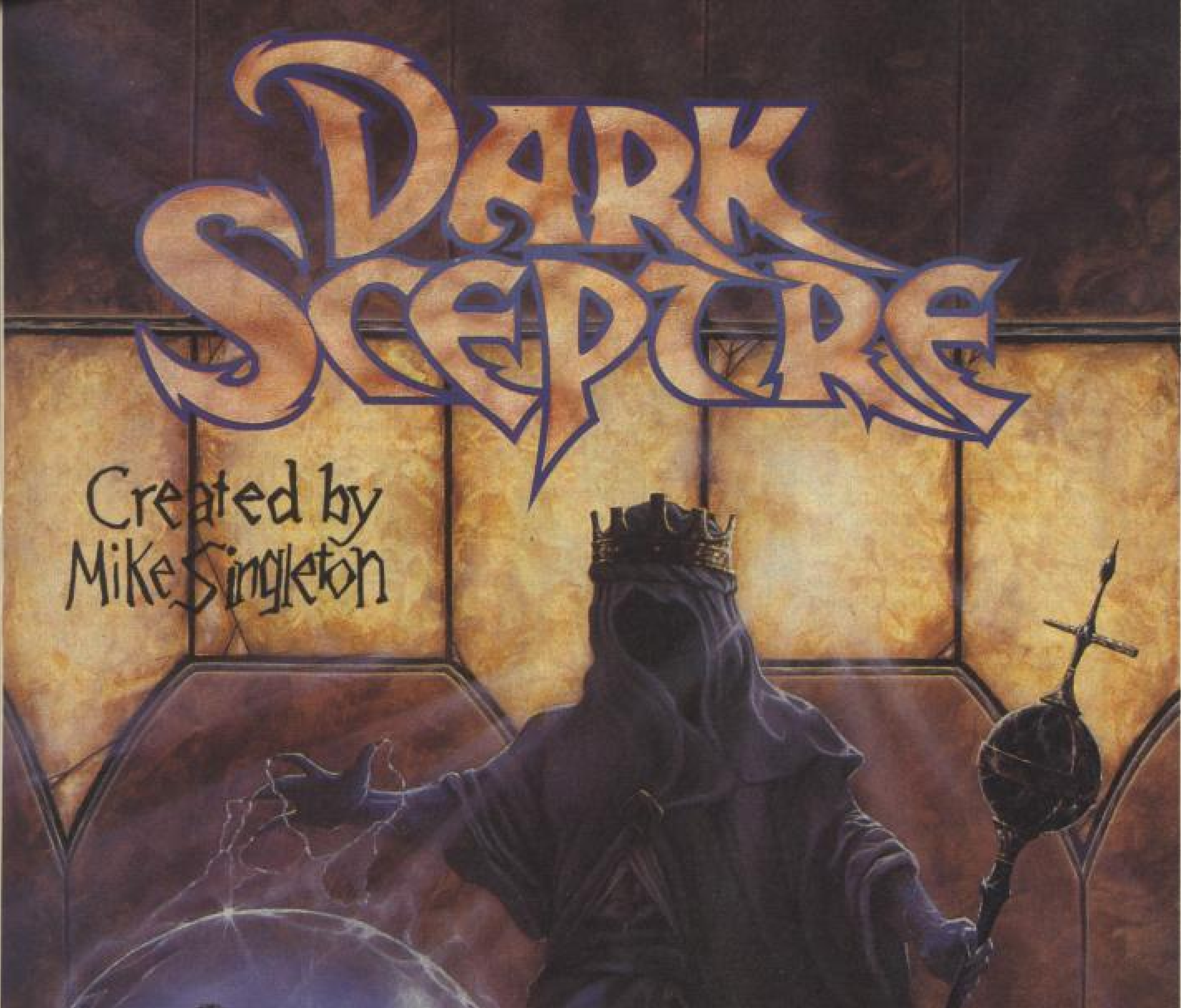
That pleasant fellow, Ace Programmer **John Ritman** leaked a tiny cheat mode on the famous *Match Day* wot he wrote with **Chris Clarke**. Apparently, if you type in "RITMAN" once the game starts, and then prod another key, the sound is turned off.

PILEFOOT IN 15 SECONDS . . .

Yes, it is possible to get the Pilefoot exit in *Heavy on the Magick* and witness Axil's great bit of slightly uncoordinated break dancing all in around 15 seconds. Well, as near as dammit depending on how nimble fingered you are. I mean, if you have fingernails like **Gary Sumpter**, our Database Minion and Biggles Freak, then you don't stand a chance, but then he is trying to get into the higher reaches of the Ming Dynasty. Anyway, enough of this waffle and on the the tip courtesy of **Mark Foster** from Hull.

1) Pick up the Grimoire
2) Go East, north, north-west
3) Say "DOOR, WOLF" and go north
4) Go north-west and Invoke Asterot say "ASTEROT, PILEFOOT"
5) Go west and say "DOOR, ELEVEN"
6) Go north through the door and watch that dude dance.





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PYRACURSE TIPS

Mr M J Brock, who informs me that a friend of his works for a well known Jelly company, has invited me to spend a couple of hours romping around in a jelly vat with him. I'm sorry, **Mr Brock** of Peterborough, but the only time I'm going to get anywhere near a vat of green jelly is when I take on that so-called Girlie Tipster from C&VG and not a moment before. Thankyou for your offer though, but I think I got enough practice in wrestling last month with that **Lolita Loren** at the *Starline Club* and there wasn't a jelly mould in sight! Anyway, enough of this.

Mr Brock actually wrote in with some Tips for HEWSON's *Pyracurse* which, coupled with the POKEs for infinite lives, should get you a bit further into your mission.

The Antechamber

This is not a particularly difficult level to get through once the basic gameplay has been mastered (see last issue). The professor is used extensively to gain entry to certain areas by activating correct key plates with keys found along the way. Levers can be operated to open new doors.

O'Donnell smashes some urns and Daphne opens chests revealing keys, weapons and cups. Frosbie digs in piles of dirt to reveal hidden items. The cups can be manoeuvered over 'dead' colleagues by the professor and Daphne which has the effect of reincarnating them. Small spinning globes are found, which when thrown by either of the humans destroy the headless zombies. There are only two kinds of keys found on this level which fit the correct shaped key plates. One key is for the chests. Eventually, after a bit of searching, a double compound is found. Using the professor you can gain entry to the top compound with the key. Once inside the complex, pull the lever down. This opens the door into the second compound. Take all the characters inside and pull the lever. The screen is now washed with blue. All characters lose their possessions and the way is opened into the Shrine. NB All characters must be present at this point.

The Shrine

This level is definitely more tricky. Guide all the characters past the scorpions and headless Zombies to the large Skull compound. Straight ahead in the walled compound is a chest. Open this with O'Donnell to reveal a key. A stumped barrier which appears can be dropped by the professor by pulling the lever down. This key gives access to to the adjacent compound. In here, using Daphne, two chests can be revealed. Opening the left chest reveals a key. Opening the other chest produces a skull guarding the exit, so leave it shut!.

Moving left, you'll find two compounds. One has a transmitter and the other a cup. Both these have levers pointing downwards. Get O'Donnell to pick up the transmitter and a door now appears. Move the professor to the compound containing the cup. This lever is now shown up. When it is pulled down it drops the door allowing O'Donnell to escape. The reverse procedure allows the cup to be taken. Take all the characters to the stumped barrier outside the skull compound. Get Frosbie to dig in the dirt thus revealing a milestone. When the professor touches this it reveals a spinning droid by the barrier itself. Touching the droid with the transmitter drops the barrier allowing access to the main playing area of the shrine.

In the main area go left. Keeping left past the stumped pathway, a key is revealed guarded by two spinning droids which drain energy on contact. When the professor uses this key in the plate near the right of the pathway, a lever is activated and pulling it down opens the door into the first compound which you have already passed. Put Frosbie in there to dig the dirt, and he reveals a key for O'Donnell to pick up.

Carry on down to a gap on the right patrolled by a headless guardian. Following the guardian to the right leads to a chest containing a cup. A door is patrolled by two spinning droids. Open the door with a lever revealing another key. Following left from the gap, you reach a double compound with levers in the up position and an urn. When the urn is touched it jumps to another compound. Nothing is found here. Operating the levers simply produces a stumped barrier and patrolling skulls. Near to here is a lever. When this is operated it opens a door to a compound, found when you retrace your steps. This compound contains a spinning globe, a cup and a key.

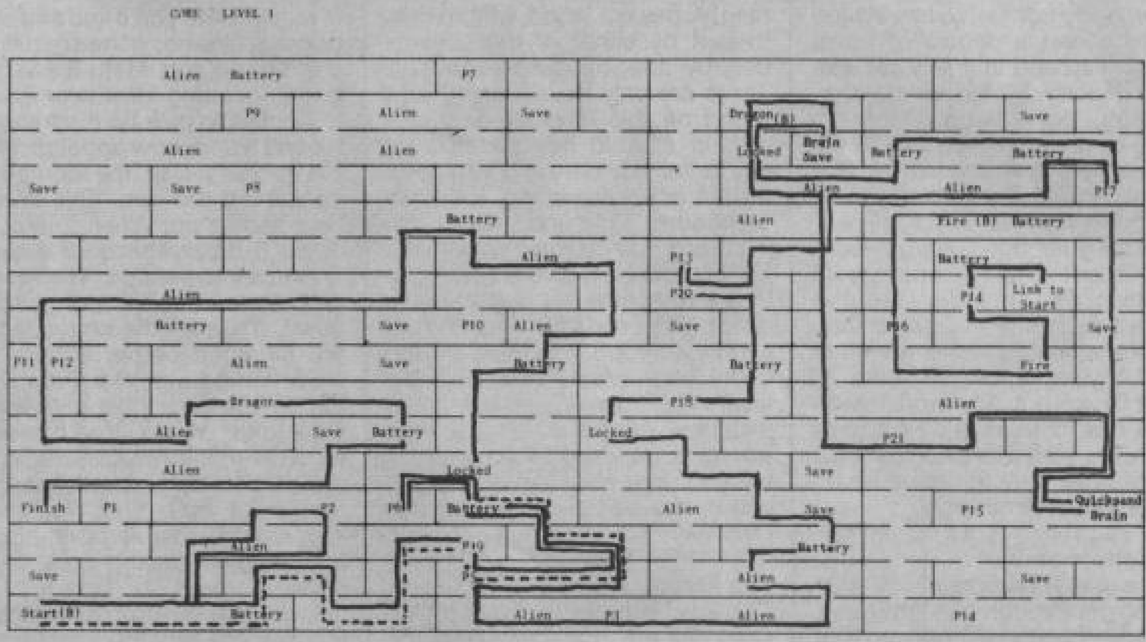
Beware the lever just up from this room. It can only be pulled by Daphne and serves no purpose at all and promptly kills her! Now retrace your steps to the main area of the playing area. Exit right and down. This leads you to a stumped pathway. Follow along the bottom of the pathway which leads to a compound with a closed door and two levers. Pull the right lever to open the door, as the left lever produces two nasty, yukky skulls. Leave, and go right, disposing of a headless guardian as you go. Here you find a spinning droid. Touch this with the professor and examine the column found here. When this is done, pass through to ►

find a chest completely enclosed with walls. You are now able to pass through the left hand wall. Use Daphne to open the chest. Inside is the fourth key.

Take three of the keys back with the professor along the stumped pathway. Avoiding the headless guardian and the scorpion, pull the lever down to gain entry. Pull the lever down on the next compound and exit left. Avoiding the two headless guardians carry on downwards and find two levers in the wall. Pull the left lever to gain entry — once again pulling the right lever produces some very bloodthirsty skulls. In this room you find four columns and one key plate. Drop the three keys here. Return with the professor and get the fourth key. Placing the correct key on the key plate causes the first column to fall and a second key plate to appear. The second key placed in this causes the second column to fall and a third key plate to appear. Put the third key in this. The fourth key placed causes the last key to fall and all characters are transported to the Sanctum.

Next issue I will be using **Mr Brock's** tips to get through the **Sanctum** and final parts of the game.

CORE LEVEL ONE



P1 - A piece of paper "Save game code"
P2 - A spade
P3 - A Tape
P4 - A gas cylinder
P5 - A metal detector
P6 - A gun
P7 - A pass card
P8 - A radio
P9 - A paint spray

P10 - A pass card
P11 - A CO2 cylinder
P12 - A gas cylinder
P13 - A fire extingisher
P14 - A box of matches
P15 - A CO2 cylinder
P16 - A CO2 cylinder
P17 - A gas cylinder
P18 - A CO2 cylinder
P19 - A piece of paper "Dig that crazy sound man"
P20 - A piece of paper "Refills available"

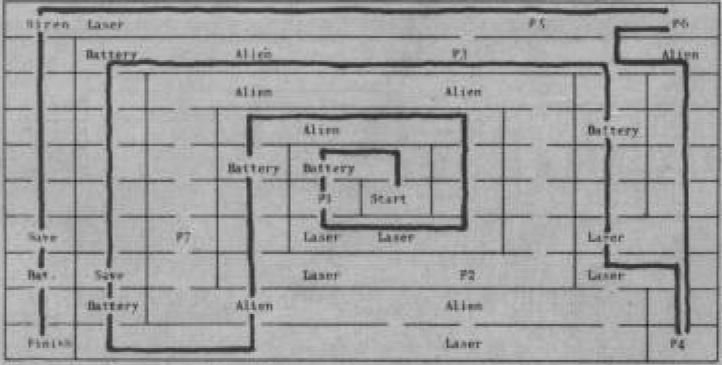
P21 - A Girder

Fire extingisher & CO2 puts out the fires
Tape allows you save games but uses a battery
Firing the gun will open locked doors & make Aliens retreat.

Fire extingisher & gas puts the dragon to sleep
Spade needed to dig up some of the objects

The girder covers the quicksand

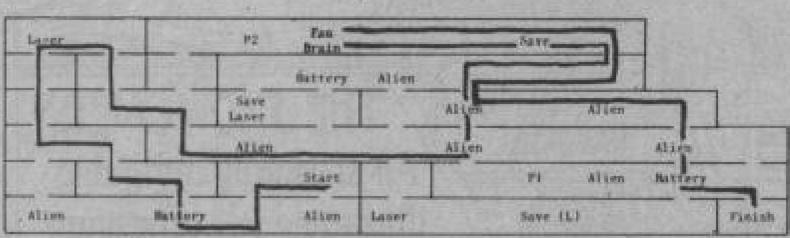
Flashing direction arrow indicates an Alien in the next screen in that direction

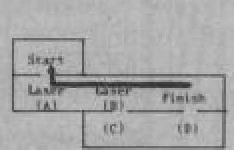


P1 - A piece of paper "Mirrors reflect lasers"
P2 - A pass card
P3 - A CO2 Cylinder
P4 - Some earmuffs
P5 - A bag of gold
P6 - Wire cutters
P7 - A piece of paper "Beware the sirens song

Silver spray + A piece of glass = a mirror

Use the earmuffs to stop the sirens song





P1 - A radio
P2 - Some sissors

Cut the fan's wire with the wire cutters

Gate (A) goes to Gate (Start)
Gate (B) goes to Gate (Finish)
Gate (C) goes to Gate (Finish)
Gate (D) goes to Gate (Finish)

GHOSTS AND GOBLINS TIPS

Last month **Andy Lowe** and **Glen Capper** sent in some tips to get you through sections one and two of **Elite**'s latest Smash *Ghosts and Goblins.* As promised here's the rest of the solution to get you through section three and complete the game. Yahooo.

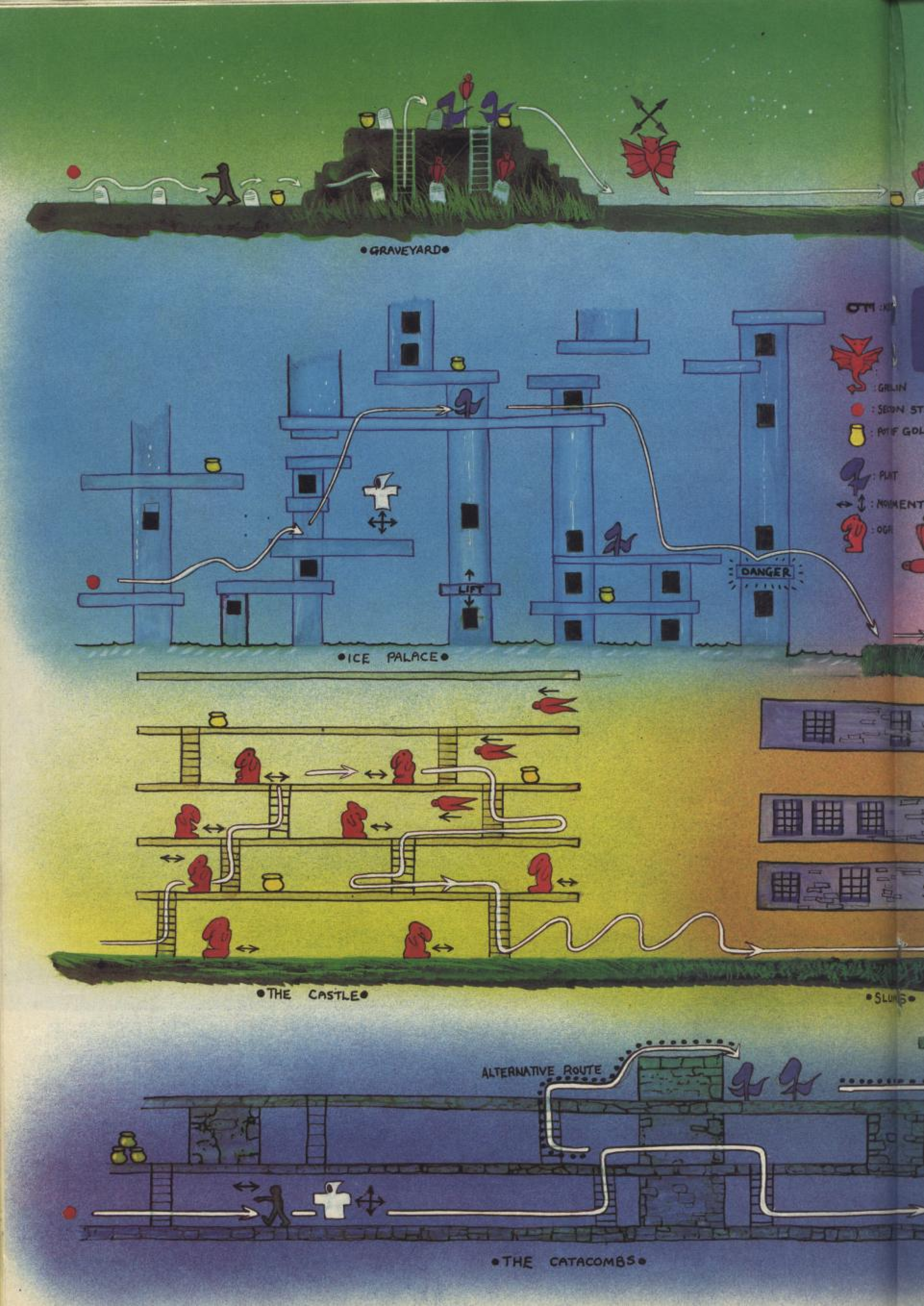
The final phase is initially very difficult. A lot of Zombies and ghosts are definitely out for your knight's blood and stuff. Just keep moving to the right. Try to stay at the bottom of the screen, that is, try not to climb too far up too many ladders or you will live to regret it, or you may die and not regret it at all. Ha, ha.

Be ready in the tunnel for the three ogres and sneaky bird attacks. After picking up the final cauldron in the tunnel go very slowly and stealthily to the right until you see the edge of a demon's left wing. Now keep still and shoot frantically. After you have shot about four rapid daggers jump up straight (still shooting) and with a bit of luck this should kill the first demon. Now run right and when you are to the right of the second demon use the jump-away/shoot backwards technique as described in last month's tips.

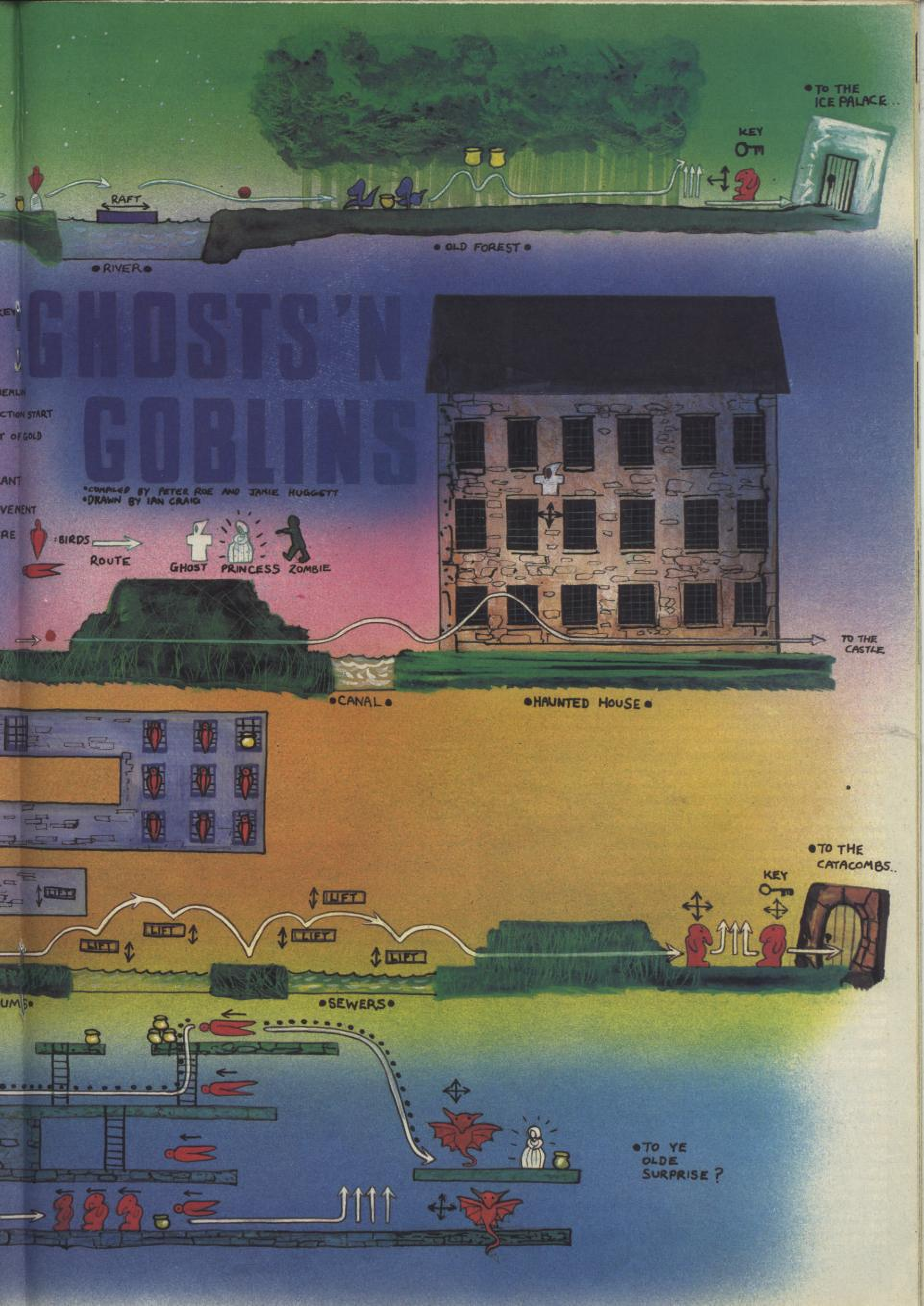
At the earliest possible moment, try to jump up and get killed in mid air as this is the only way to get to the princess (obviously, you need your armour initially). When both demons are dead you get the "save the princess" message. Just touch her and you are be warned of worse dangers to come. And that's it.

Andy and Glen also put a cryptic clue at the bottom of their letter, saying that there is an easier way to complete the final stage of the game. Just the make the ULTIMATE SACRIFICE. Whatever that means. . . .

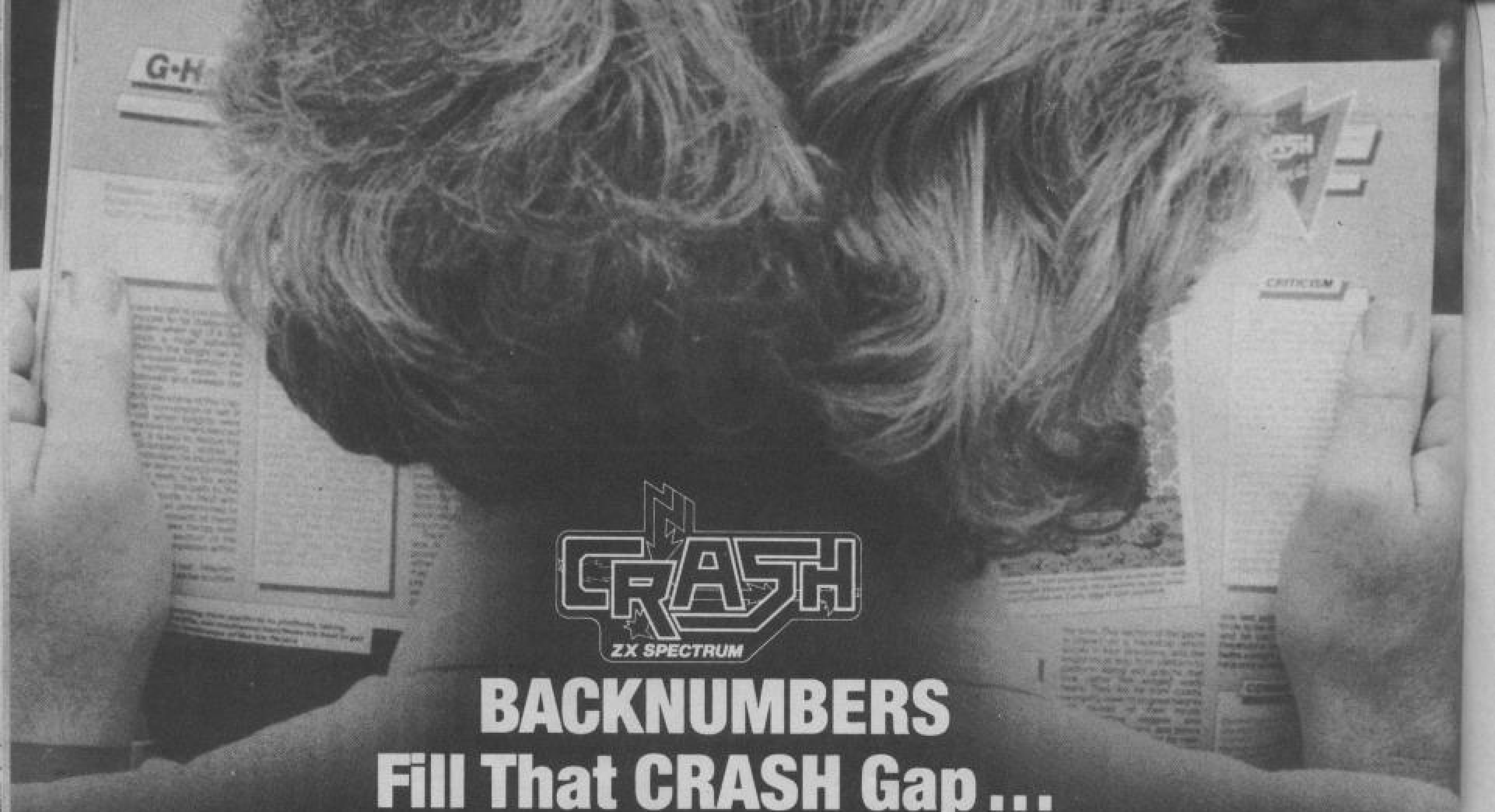
And as **Shaun Wilcock** from West Yorkshire pointed out to me, I left something rather important out of the *Ghosts and Goblins* Tips last month. At the end of every stage a key falls from the sky. If you move your knight to the left of the screen the key lands to the right of him. You must destroy this key because it's a fake. Fear not gentle reader, for after the bogus key has been destroyed the genuine key drops into your hot and sweaty hands and your knight ears himself 6,000 points. Coo, now ain't that a thing?. . . .



GRAVEYARD
ICE PALACE
LIFT
DANGER
THE CASTLE
SLUMS
ALTERNATIVE ROUTE
THE CATACOMBS



GHOSTS'N GOBLINS
•COMPILED BY PETER ROE AND JAMIE HUGGETT
•DRAWN BY IAN CRAIG
:BIRDS
ROUTE
GHOST
PRINCESS
ZOMBIE
•TO THE ICE PALACE..
KEY
RAFT
•RIVER•
•OLD FOREST•
TO THE CASTLE
•CANAL•
•HAUNTED HOUSE•
•TO THE CATACOMBS..
KEY
LIFT
LIFT
LIFT
LIFT
LIFT
LIFT
•SEWERS•
•TO YE OLDE SURPRISE ?



BACKNUMBERS
Fill That CRASH Gap . . .

3:April 84 ●Missile Command games●Living Guide●Code Name Mat

4:May 84 ●The Quill Utility●Graphics utilities●Microdrive●'Pengo' games●Living Guide

10:Nov 84 ●Battlefield Joystick — comparisons●Deus Ex Machina

17:Jun 85 ●Denton Designs●Frankie●Spectrum surgery●Sinclair Story 3●Knight Lore Map 1●Underwurlde Map 2●Tape to Microdrive●Leonardo Graphics utility●Datel sound sampler●Artist: David Thorpe

18:Jul 85 ●Gremlin Graphics profile●Artist Bob Wakelin●Sinclair TV●Tape Magazines●Leonardo utility part two●CRASHBACK looks again at games in issue 8●Gyron Map of Atrium●Modems round-up●And the cover that had the Jehovas Jumping!

19:Aug 85 ●WITHOUT PAGES 123,124,125 and 126. WITH:●CRL Profile●Pull out Oliposter — Fighting Spectrum●Mirrorsoft Profile●Inside the Timex 2068●Round Up of BASIC compilers●On the Cover Artist Rich Shenfield●Maps of Dynamite Dan and Shadowfire

20:Sep 85 ●ALIEN 8 and DUN DARACH maps●Electronic Pencil Company Profile●Part Two of BASIC Compilers Round-up●The 64K Spectrum●Design Design Autoprofile, Part 1●Rod Cousens interview

21:Oct 85 ●Previews of MARSPORT, ASTROCLONE, ELITE●NODES OF YESOD map●Holografix profile — how to make a Hologram●Crashtionnaire analysis●Platinum Productions profile

22:Nov 85 ●Feature on small computer magazines — looking at the opposition●Microdrive tips and hints in TECH NICHE and part two of the fast storage feature●Susan Rowe is on the Cover●An inside look at Fantasy Gamebooks

23:Dec 85 ●Visit to Melbourne House●Minson goes Surfing●The Design Design autoprofile ends●Computer graphics feature — On The Cover is Dave Beeson from Central TV●Scary cover and Scary Preview of Friday 13th

Xmas 1985/6 ●On the Cover Special — our very own Oliver Frey occupies five pages●Profile of the Gargoyle Games crew●Lloyd's Lookback, 1985 revisited●Hewson Consultants profile●Short story●Festive Fun and Frolics

25:Feb 86 ●Durell — the profile●A chat with the Microsphere team●Double Dose of Jetman●Gremlin Graphics bring a Ninja to the Spectrum●TECH NICHE looks at a FORTH add-on and examines extensions to ZX BASIC

26:Mar 86 ●ST BRIDE's Profile● A first look at the Spectrum 128●Micronet 800●Romantic Robot's Multiface One under scrutiny●Diary of 2186

27:Apr 86 ●Massive 23 page Playing Tips Supplement●1985 Readers Awards results●Mel Croucher interview●Imagine profile●Round up of 128K games●A visit to the first Play By Mail convention

28:May 86 ●Update on the Fanzine scene●MARTECH profile and PLANETS preview●DIY Composite Video Interface●Inside Cheetah's SpecDrum●FRONTLINE Mini Strategyback●CRASHTIONNAIRE 86 analysis

29:Jun 86 ●First PBM MAILBOX and CRASH GALLERY●SpecDrum listing●Homegrown software●REALTIME profile●Compilations compared●Maps of CYLU, SIR FRED, SABOTEUR and Parts 1 and 2 of TANTALUS

30:Jul 86 ●More CRASH/RAINBIRD Gallery●More Homegrown Software●THE BIRTH OF A GAME: some early entries●Good Games by DESIGN●Luna Jetman returns

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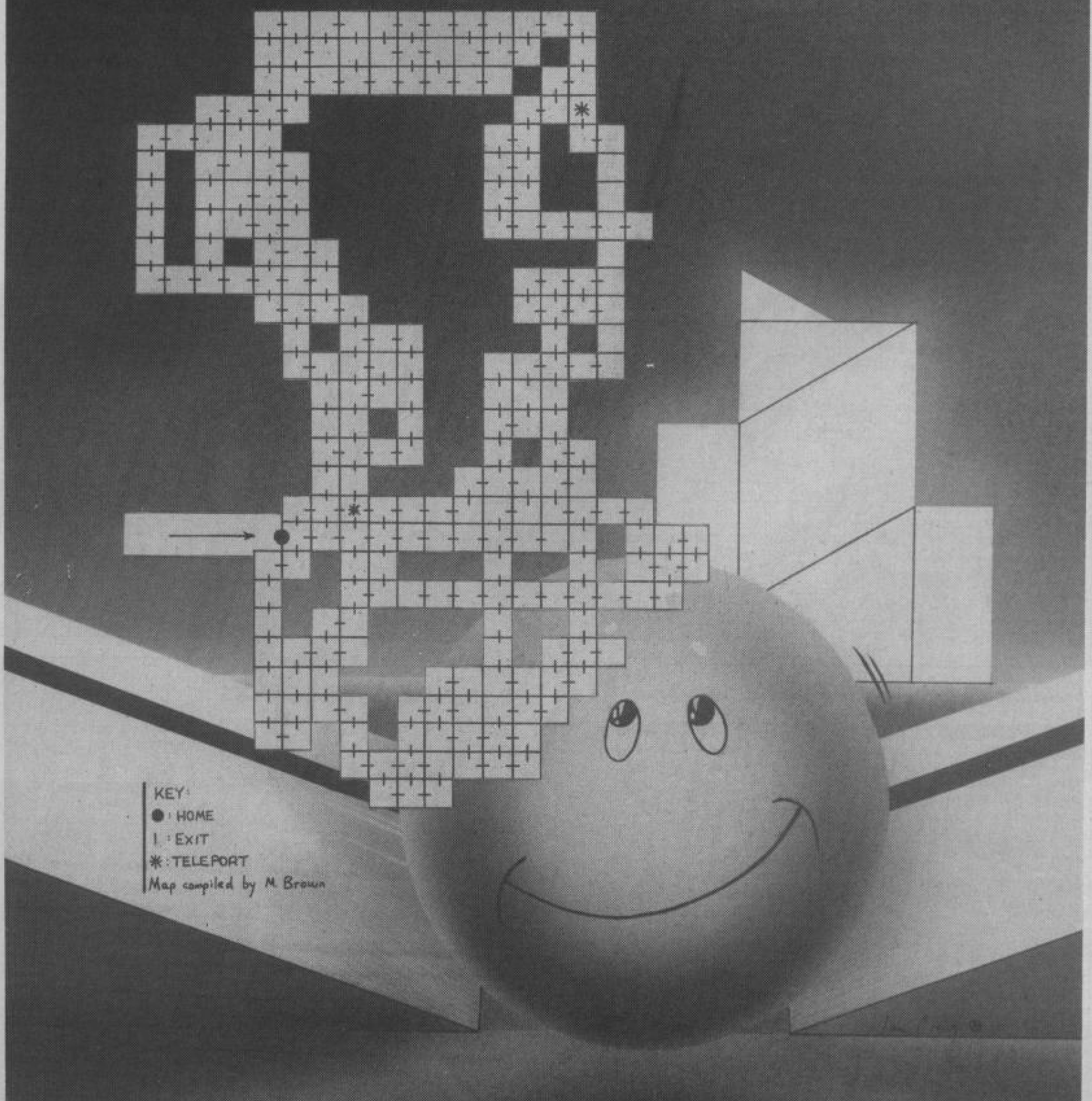
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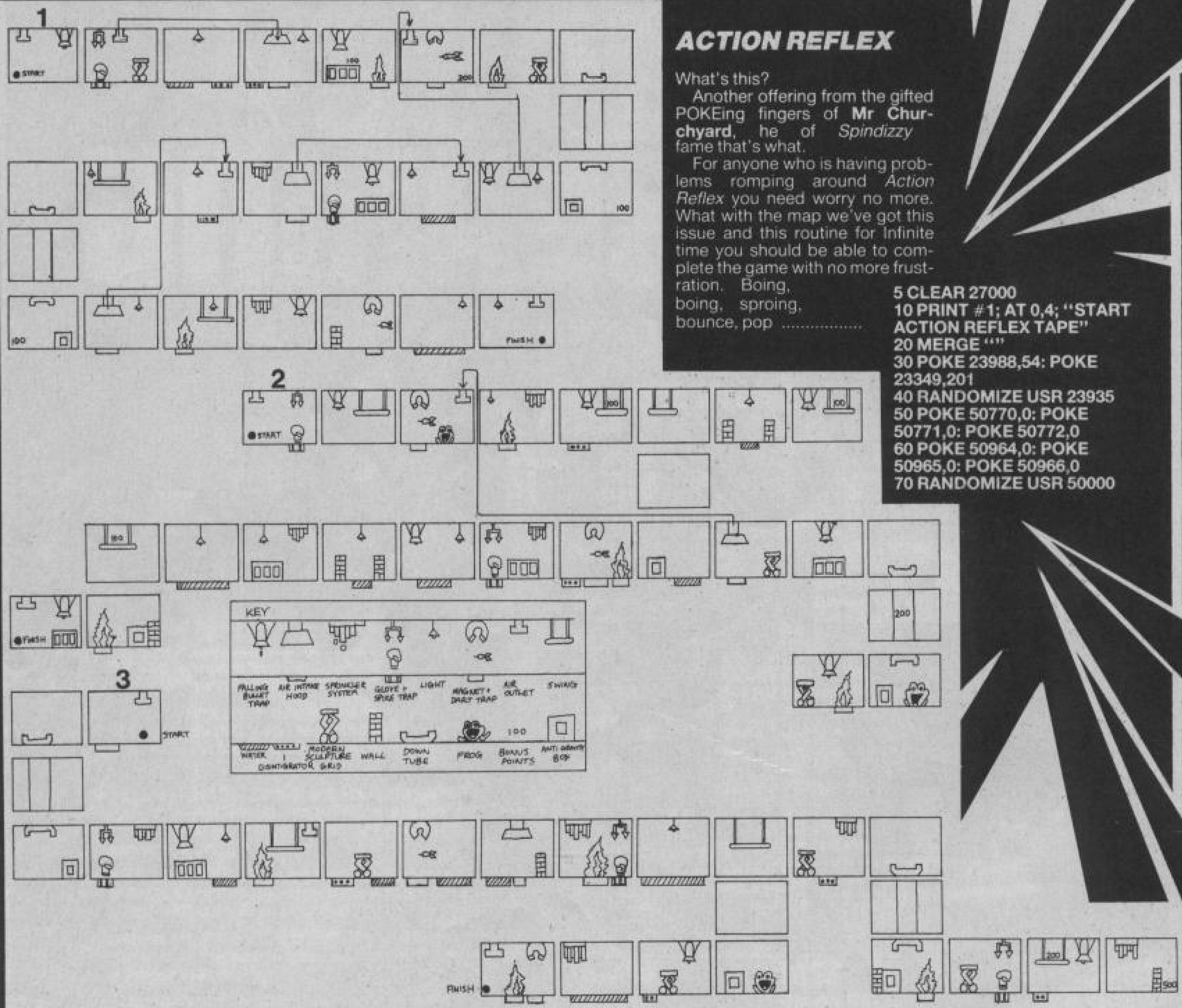
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BOBBY BEARING





ACTION REFLEX

What's this?

Another offering from the gifted POKEing fingers of **Mr Churchyard**, he of *Spindizzy* fame that's what.

For anyone who is having problems romping around *Action Reflex* you need worry no more. What with the map we've got this issue and this routine for Infinite time you should be able to complete the game with no more frustration. Boing, boing, sproing, bounce, pop ....

```
5 CLEAR 27000
10 PRINT #1; AT 0,4; "START
ACTION REFLEX TAPE"
20 MERGE ""
30 POKE 23988,54: POKE
23349,201
40 RANDOMIZE USR 23935
50 POKE 50770,0: POKE
50771,0: POKE 50772,0
60 POKE 50964,0: POKE
50965,0: POKE 50966,0
70 RANDOMIZE USR 50000
```

JACK THE NIPPER POKEs

Chris Smith and **Jason Bean** who earned the Top Tipster award for their maps and tips for *Jack the Nipper* in the August Issue have sent in some POKEs for infinite lives for the same game. This is very handy in order to become a little horror.

Chris and **Jason** were also quick to point out that they're not both from Haxby in York. **Chris Smith** is actually from a place called Pocklington, so I shall have to refer to them as the **Industrious Hackers from Haxby and Pocklington** from now on. Sorry lads, doesn't have the same ring to it really.

```
10 REM JACK THE NIPPER
POKES
20 REM C.SMITH AND J.BEAN
30 RESTORE
40 LET w=1
50 LET tot=0
60 FOR i=49998 TO 50070
70 READ a: LET tot=tot  a*w
80 LET w=w+1
90 POKE i,a
100 NEXT i
110 IF tot<> 319540 THEN
PRINT "ERROR IN DATA":
BEEP1,1: STOP
120 PRINT #1; AT 14, 1; "START
JACK THE NIPPER TAPE"
130 RANDOMIZE USR 49998
1000 DATA 0, 221, 33, 203, 92
1010 DATA 17, 116, 1, 62, 255
1020 DATA 55, 205, 86, 5, 210
1030 DATA 78, 195, 33, 135, 195
1040 DATA 17, 213, 93, 1, 17
1050 DATA 0, 237, 176, 33, 35
1060 DATA 191, 237, 99, 26, 93
1070 DATA 33, 209, 255, 237, 99
1080 DATA 33, 93, 175, 61, 50
1090 DATA 167, 93, 33, 195, 209
1100 DATA 237, 99, 165, 93, 195
1110 DATA 0, 93, 175, 50, 0
1120 DATA 170, 33, 0, 0, 237
1130 DATA 99, 1, 170, 175, 211
1140 DATA 254, 55, 201
```

EQUINOX CORRECTION

That ZX Printer has been at it again. The *Equinox* POKEs printed last month had the tiniest mistake which meant that the program wouldn't run. Loads of people wrote in with the correction (which is very simple). But in case anyone couldn't work out what was wrong, then here's how it should have read Line 70 should have been:

POKE i,a: LET WEIGHT = WEIGHT+1
instead of
POKE 1,a: LET WEIGHT = WEIGHT + 1.

As you can see the ZX Printer cunningly disguised a 1 for an i in a feeble attempt to louse up my Playing Tips. It might have succeeded had it not been for the eagle eyes of **Christopher Dark** and many other readers who pointed it out to me. **Christopher** obviously has a very well behaved ZX Printer. Mine's going to get a right talking to. When I can find it. . . .

Once again, I come to the end of another month's **Playing Tips** and a semblance of normality returns to the CRASH office. Tomorrow I shall have to start clearing all the mess away on my desk or I shall feel the sharp end of Graeme's Doc Marten boot. Sigh.

Next month I would really like maps for *Heartland* and *Pyracurse* and Tips and POKEs on anything that has recently been reviewed in CRASH. Also, any funny or unusual POKEs (like the one printed this issue for *Batman* having super-human leaps) would be appreciated.

Mark any correspondence for my attention: HANNAH SMITH (THE UNDISPUTED GIRLIE TIPSTER), CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB


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TECH NICHE



Last month being traditional holiday time, this columnist had a holiday! To make up for this loss, there are goodies aplently dished up for your ear and eye in this slightly enlarged section including a bolt-on keyboard synth for the 128, a amplifier for any Spectrum and the re-vamp of Wham the Music Box for the 128.

MORE MUSICAL INTERLUDES

ECHO MUSICAL SYNTHESIZER

Producer HCCS
Price **£59.95**

Some while ago, we asked HCCS for a review. After a reasonable time had elapsed, both the Editor and I ran up several quids worth of phone bill trying to wheedle a review copy for me to tinker with. Finally, the synth system turned up, but on arrival at Chateau Bates it was found not to work. More phone calls, a very helpful service department, a second interface, still no sound. Eventually it was discovered that the keyboard had a loose connector. Plug in and away we go.

Meanwhile something in the back of what passes for my brain rang a bell and I went scampering through my old leaflets and files. Sure enough a few years back there was, for the BBC computer, the very same keyboard and amplifier with a rather decent music package with tons of voices, effects, chords and percussion. I rubbed my tiny hands with glee. However, I quickly discovered that the Spectrum 128 version was quite different. In fact the software is re-written and much simplified.

On loading up the screen displays a miserly 8 preset voices. Now whilst the sound chip in the 128 is not exactly the bee's knees, the presets didn't really do justice to it. The voices had the right shape to them but there was a rapid series of clicks that accompanied each sound, caused by the software being organised in such a way that each tiny increment of volume and/or pitch created a very audible click. And as there are plenty of increments for each sound this quickly becomes very tiresome.

The preset display allows you to crank the pitch up and down either in fractions of a tone or complete octaves. Pressing the space key gets you into the sound editing page which consists of a static graph and allows easy access to the various peripherals of the sound: attack; sustain; decay and release. Unfortunately, you can't hear the changes that you have made without flipping back to the other screen display page, which makes sound editing a somewhat tedious process. It would have been most useful if the graph had reshaped itself so that you had a visual guide to the shape of the sound. In other words apart from informing you about the constituent parts of a sound shape (termed an envelope) the graph serves no active purpose.

The sounds you have created can be dumped onto tape and loaded back at later dates. More omissions — you can't give your new sounds a name, so if you have created lots of sounds you have no point of reference. Mind you, the system can only store eight sounds at a time, so shuffling through a tape to find that wonderful sound you made at 4am in the morning could take some time.

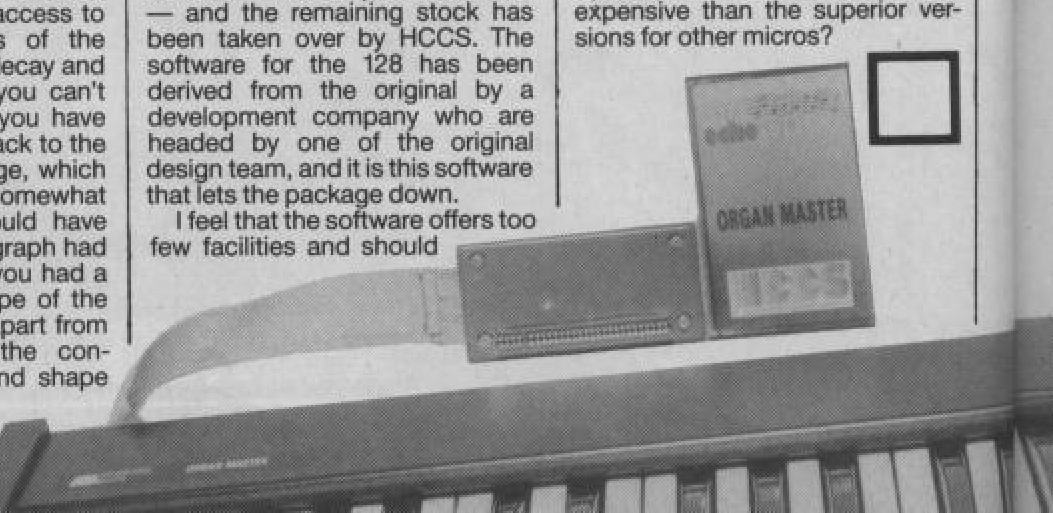
It comes with a decent full-size, three octave keyboard plus interface: the software is available on both cassette and Microdrive. I can't tell you much about the interface, as both the units I had were prototypes and not in their final form. No doubt, the production version will arrive in an anonymous small black box that plugs into the expansion port.

The company who originally developed this for the BBC and Commodore machines went the way of many other software houses — into corporate oblivion — and the remaining stock has been taken over by HCCS. The software for the 128 has been derived from the original by a development company who are headed by one of the original design team, and it is this software that lets the package down.

I feel that the software offers too few facilities and should give you noise-free envelopes for sounds! The market is full of far superior software controls for the same chip and with 128K of memory to go at, there is really no excuse for omitting such obvious provisions as sequencing, note display, song files, access to the noise channel, chord playing, and maybe some additional filtering in the add-on hardware. Not to mention using the MIDI out port present on the 128.

Although the system includes a keyboard, I feel it very non-competitive in today's market. One gets a trifle niggled when companies suggest that users could develop their own software for expensive products like this . . . It is one thing to make minor adjustments to a product by way of fine-tuning for personal need, but it is another matter altogether to launch a very basic product at a price which is far from basic and then expect the paying public to re-design it for you.

And why is the vastly inferior Spectrum 128 version more expensive than the superior versions for other micros?



ECHOSOUND SPEAKER/ AMPLIFIER



Producer HCCS
Price **£39.95**

This was previously marketed by its original developers at £49.95 and at 5p off £40, it now represents a better bargain. Basically it is a twin-cone speaker well matched to a reasonable monophonic amplifier with tone and volume controls. Sound quality is very acceptable and it is a handy little add-on to have about. It takes a mini-jack input so you can use the data recorder lead to connect the mic socket on the Spectrum to the Echosound.

The unit itself is mains powered, and I was pleased to note that it is also internally fused for extra safety should you fail to wire it up properly or drop it in the fish tank. The unit is quite compact, about 24cm x 18cm x 12cm and finished in best MFI placky wood. Unless you have a hi-fi equipped with suitable plugs handy to your micro it makes for a convenience item that is neither cheap nor expensive but of good quality. And you could use it to amplify anything else you have about.

Hccs plan to market the speaker/amplifier unit along with the synthesizer as one package for £84.90, including a free keyboard tutor for good measure.

THE MUSIC BOX (48K & 128K)

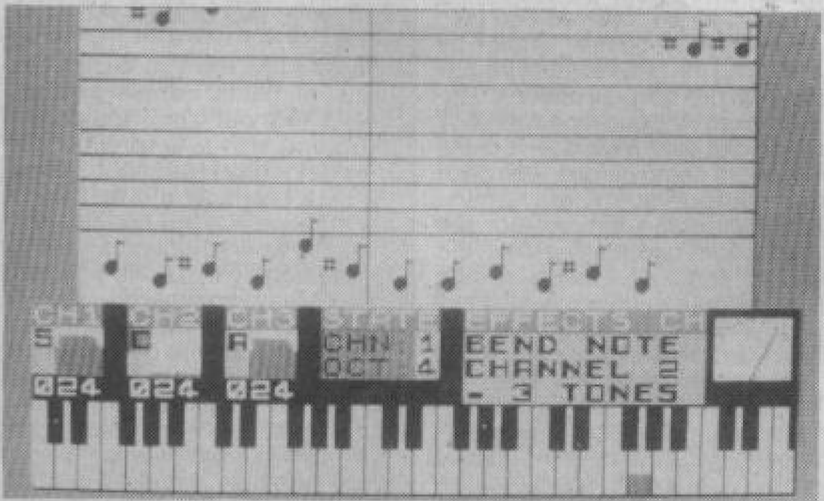
Producer Melbourne House
Price **£9.95**
Author: **Mark Alexander**

After the success of *Wham. The Music Box*, **Mark Alexander** has vastly improved the sound capabilities, taking full advantage of the sound chip on board the 128. The original version for the 48K machine uses the Beep command split by a routine to create a duophonic effect and has some options for adding percussive noise. Note entry is achieved via the bottom two rows of keys which, in combination with an octave key, gives you a range of about five octaves per voice.

Note values are limited to quavers only, but you can join them together to form longer notes — rests are inserted from the ENTER key. As you enter notes on the second channel you automatically hear the first track along with it, which means that bum notes in a harmony are instantly recognised. Tempo is variable and editing is absurdly simply — just advance through the tune step by step till you hear the offending note, select the special effects or commands you have specified as they occur during the piece. The effects, assignable to each channel individually, are as follows:

a) altering the envelope volume which will help you to get joined notes sound smoother, getting rid of the rather annoying pulse present in the 48K version.
b) altering the individual levels of the channels so that a good sound balance is possible.
c) an additional looping facility
d) the ability to make any channel slide up and down in pitch. This can produce very spectacular effects.

The display has a volume meter like a VU meter on a hi-fi. A piano keyboard running across the bottom of the screen shows you where your notes are being played or entered, with a different colour used on the display for each channel. The colour of the screen border can be altered to suit.



the channel and overwrite. There is also a looping facility for each channel so that sequences can be set up or repeats of the whole piece can be arranged.

So how does the 128 version improve on this? Plenty, is the answer. The opening turn for the screen display is 'Peter Gunn' in a cleverly designed arrangement that shows off the three channels of sound plus percussion. Each channel can be set to produce a different sound by some rather clever software that allows you to design your own sound envelope. Note entry and editing is very much the same as in the 48K version and the display shows you where you are in the piece as the notes scroll past a fixed point.

Each channel has a window display showing you which sound envelope number it is using complete with a graph of that envelope. It also registers the note number counted from the beginning of the piece. A larger window flashes up

From the main menu, apart from the usual load and save options, there are help pages and sections dedicated to defining the sound envelopes. The latter are noise-free and produce some pretty good sounds. The envelope editing cleverly uses a set of bar graphs that shape the sound via the arrow keys, each alteration being plotted in an adjoining window. It comes with eight preset sound envelopes so that you are not completely at sea. When transferred to the main display each sound graph is reproduced in miniature in the channel window.

There are also nine preset drum noises that can be varied far more than on the 48K version: a wider choice of frequencies and volumes is available via the envelope editing procedure. Any percussion effect has to be put onto one of the three channels but you can switch from percussion to notes within each channel, and with careful planning the loss of one channel for an instant is not noticable.

Your homespun masterpieces can be saved to RAM disc as well as cassette. Like the 48K version it has a compiler which produces a machine code routine which lets you put tunes into programs of your own creation.

The accompanying documentation and instructions are all fairly accurate, although the key reference guide needs amending for the 128. For example the 'step back one note' command only worked when SYMBOL SHIFT was held down. CAPS LOCK and P independently allows you to step through the tune event by event (note by note as they occur). But it does list a 'get you started' tune for you to enter, as well as six preprogrammed tunes that put *The Music Box* through it's paces very successfully, even if some of the tunes are a wee bit inaccurate.

If improvements are to be made, I would like to see some sort of advanced editing whereby defined sections of the tune could be filed away and re-ordered into a song format. Self-created envelopes could also be stored in this way to allow access to the sound parameters more quickly: an envelope file as it were.

If you were only going to buy one music program, then buy *The Music Box* for the 128. It's a definite winner, and will take a lot of beating.

Mark Jones of Northampton has sent in a *Wham! Music Box* generated tape of about 14 tunes for my approval — Gosh I could be a music critic as well!! Anyway, they are passable and are a good example of what you can do if you put your mind to it. Mark also suggests that owners of this program can have flashing borders in time to their ditties by typing in:

POKE (Start Address of tune) + 132,19

that is to say, if the start address of the *Wham*piled tune is 32768 you would type in:

POKE 32900,19

Quick gripe time. If you are sending me a cassette please, please mark it with your name and what it is to run with and whether it contains audio or data. Chateau Bates is getting a bit flooded with unmarked cassettes and extreme confusion late at night is not good for the health.

Finally this month a simple music utility for those of you who need a metronome. **Simon** and **Terry Graham** have sent a simple metronome program. It displays an animated metronome that begs you to enter a number of beats per minute, and then ticks away giving you the right amount of bleeps per minute. Metronomes are about £15-45 in the shops, but a quick fee of £1.50 to 14 Oxenton Croft, Halesowen B63, West Midlands should ensure that you can keep good time while you play.

Keep the tapes coming in, and if you have difficulty with 48K music programs not working on the 128 machine, let us know and we'll see what can be done . . .

TECH TIPS



This month Simon Goodwin investigates Spectrum 128 sounds, joystick repairs and mains interference. He also reviews two packages intended to turn all and sundry into programmers and games designers!

BACK TO BASICS

There must have been hundreds of books published that promise to teach 'anyone' to write BASIC programs. Even discounting the ones by **Tim Hartnell** and **Ian Sinclair**.

It is now fashionable to publish book and cassette combinations — where the cassette is little more than a consolation prize for the unlucky purchaser, when he or she discovers that the book is impenetrable to anyone lacking a degree in maths, a dictionary of computing and the ability to learn entirely by inference.

Despite this dismal pedigree, and a typically cliched title, **Jim Maitland**'s *Basically Speaking* package is a good effort, and may well teach a few Mums, Dads and (notoriously ignorant) Computer Science teachers what programming is all about.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

The package starts out from the assumption that the reader is interested, but probably non-technical; perhaps a bit overawed by computers, not given to much reading, and not necessarily equipped with 'O' level Maths. Many books claim to use a similar starting point, but they don't maintain it for long . . .

The last paragraph comes from the covering letter which came with the CRASH copy of *Basically Speaking*. Jim Maitland has certainly done his homework, as indeed one might expect of a Physics teacher with two teenage computerholic sons. Just to make sure that I spotted all his hard work, he includes a careful critique of other 'beginner's BASIC' books, and an analysis of his response — he's definitely taking no chances with reviewers!

For £8.95 you get the usual black plastic binder holding a 100-page paperback book and a data cassette. The text has been produced with a daisywheel printer; the layout is neat and there are plenty of diagrams and gaps to keep things looking interesting. Some rather twee cartoons pop up every so often — sometimes these add to the text but they're often more embarrassing than illuminating.

General interest books written by teachers often fall down because they patronise their audience. To some extent *Basically Speaking* falls into this trap. The author aims to write for young and old, but sometimes he unnecessarily divides his audience. Overall, though, the text is carried by its conversational style and relaxed humour.

The book starts with a brief, friendly introduction, containing two 'Golden Rules':

1 *Don't wonder what would happen if . . . Try it out. Experiment! Be bold. Pressing wrong keys won't harm the computer.*

2 *If it refuses to respond, no matter what you do, just switch off and start again.*

Armed with this excellent advice — which trades much of the mystique of computers for fascination — the reader is gently introduced to the computer keyboard.

There are different versions of the book for Spectrum and Spectrum Plus users. The publishers think that the beginner has enough to cope with initially without having to wade through footnotes and brackets to find out which phrase or statement applies to that particular machine. It is a shame — especially given the large market that this book should find in shops — that the two editions are not distinguished by pictures of the target machine on the cover. Retailers need all the help they can get.



CURRICULUM

The course consists of twelve units, covering most areas of ZX BASIC: arithmetic, decisions, loops, strings, arrays, sound and so on. Each unit consists of a few pages from the book, and a couple of short programs on tape. The text is strewn with simple but ingenious exercises, with solutions provided.

The book ends with an appendix about keyboard fingering, a brief glossary and an index. The programs on the tape are simple and tend to crash if you type gibberish into them, but they're easy to list and understand.

The course does not go into any detail about graphics, and it certainly doesn't teach programming as a profession or as an engineering discipline — the coverage is practical, with virtually no theory. But — within its brief — *Basically Speaking* is accurate, friendly and fun.

ANY GAME YOU LIKE

ARGUS SOFTWARE's *Arcade Creator* is a package aimed at a very different market — people who definitely DON'T want to learn to program, but who still want to invent games.

Arcade Creator is a package in the tradition of **QUICKSILVA**'s *Games Designer* and *Hurg* from **MELBOURNE HOUSE**. The aim is to distil the elements of a game design away from the underlying program — so that you can produce original games simply by designing the graphics and selecting from pre-set play options.

QUICKSILVA's package was easy to use but very limited — it came with eight demo games, with each one packed into 1K of memory. *Hurg* was more flexible, but not much. Both had the flaw that you had to load the main package before you could load a game of your own. *Arcade Creator* removes that restriction, but brings its own disadvantages.

For £14.95 you get yet another black video box with two cassettes and a ten-page typeset manual rattling around inside. The documentation is rudimentary; just a tour of the tape contents from Tape 1 Side 1 to Tape 2 Side 2, with commentaries on the process of game design en route.

The text is readable and restrictions are clearly stated, usually with a helpful explanation. I found the '2' key listed in place of 'Z' at one point, and could not find the game control keys listed anywhere, but both of these faults were easy to correct by experiment.

The first thing I do when judging any kind of design program is look at the examples provided. In this case I just got a ten-screen platform game, by the name of *Nutty Gnome*. This is a bad advertisement for the package, and certainly too poor a game to be published separately by any established budget house. It takes me back to early 1983, with its inaccurate collision detection and flickering, blocky graphics, including square-edged trees.

Arcade Creator forces you to build up backgrounds from user-defined characters; you can only use a total of 84 characters in all twenty possible screens, so background graphics have to be simple or horrid. If you abandon graphics altogether you can design a game with up to 40 'screens' or, strictly, attack waves. Don't bother if you've already got a copy of *Arcadia*.

. . . AS LONG AS IT'S

The package lets you design two types of game: simple platform games (without lifts, belts or ladders, and with a fixed jump distance) or 'chase and shoot' games where a character moves around the screen shooting baddies and barriers, and collecting treasure, weapons, keys, glasses or whatever. Many commercial games have been designed around these formats, but they're getting dated and 'hit' programs tended to add features to the bare bones, like the ropes in *Jet Set Willy* or the moving platforms in *Chukkie Egg*.

In either case you must start by designing the sound effects, sprites (moving graphics) and user-defined characters which will be used to build up background pictures.

Sprites are designed on a 16x16 pixel grid — about average for Spectrum arcade games and significantly better than the 12x12 of **QUICKSILVA**'s *Games Designer*. Sprites are drawn by colouring points on a grid; the complete pattern can be 'rotated' in 90 degree steps, 'reflected' to face the other side of the screen, or 'inverted' by swapping coloured and empty points. You can design up to 21 sprites, each of which can have up to four steps of animation. As the game is played the sprite cycles quickly through the steps, so that it looks alive.

User-defined graphics are drawn in a similar way, but on an 8x8 grid. The graphics are stored in four groups, each holding 21 patterns.

The sound generator is easy to use and versatile — you can get



just about any noise that can be made up from a single fluctuating tone, including sirens, buzzes, bleeps and 'white noise' explosion effects. The program stores up to eight different effects, and any six of these can be associated with events during the game — collisions, level changes, and so on.

The graphics are frozen while sound effects are produced — as on most early Spectrum games — but this doesn't matter much if you keep the noises short. There's no continuous music during play, but a jingle is played before the game starts — there are three pre-set possibilities.

The screen designer is very limited. Your pictures must be built up from small user-defined graphics, rather than lines and shapes drawn freehand. The results look like a Lego building site.

After designing that lot you must save it all on tape and load a second program, which leads you through a set of questions about the game, such as its name, the number of screens, and the game type. A decreasing bonus score can be pre-set, with an option to stop play if the countdown reaches zero.

Then you assign sprites to be players, enemies, missiles, treasure and so on, setting their initial positions, movement (if any, in eight directions at twelve possible speeds), and the effect of collisions with other sprites and the background. You set the initial direction of movement, but the rest of the path depends upon what gets in the way.

When you've positioned and programmed every sprite on every screen you can load a third program to produce a separate game file which can be loaded on its own.

. . . BEEN DONE BEFORE

This is very clever, and neatly done, but it's not the way that real games are designed. You develop real games interactively — you position the graphics and play for a while, then you adjust the background to make things easier or more difficult, fiddle with the speeds, add and remove sprites, and generally build things up piecemeal.

Even the most brilliant and experienced game designers use this ad hoc approach to get things absolutely spot-on. It is even more important for beginners to be able to experiment; yet it's virtually impossible to work that way with *Arcade Creator*, because you have to save and re-load everything, and troll through the question and answer sequence, every time you make a change.

All three sections of the package should really be built into one program. The second two parts agree largely programmed in BASIC, so it should be possible to make them much more concise by re-writing them in machine code. *Arcade Creator* runs on the Spectrum 128 but does not appear to make use of the extra RAM. Nor is there any support for disks or Microdrives.

If you're interested in games you may be able to while away a few evenings playing with *Arcade Creator*. But if you really want to design and test your own games it's no alternative to 'real' programming. *Arcade Creator* lets you fiddle with pre-set games, but it doesn't give you the freedom to design anything really original.

SPIKED!

Picture this: you're just about to score your best ever on *Olympic Death Set Dragonzone* (or whatever); then you hear a click from the fridge or the central heating; the TV picture flickers and random graphics appear all over the screen, soon followed by that horrible **© 1982 Uncle Clive** message. You've been spiked!

Even momentary interference in the mains electricity supply is enough to stop a computer. Lots of electrical appliances — especially ones containing electric motors — can generate spikes which upset the precise timing of a Spectrum.

Back in June we looked at DURAPLUG's gadget which sits between your computer and the wall-socket, isolating the machine from the worst excesses of the National Grid. The snag was that it cost £18, which might be good value for a business user but is a high price for the home gamester to pay, especially if problems are rare.

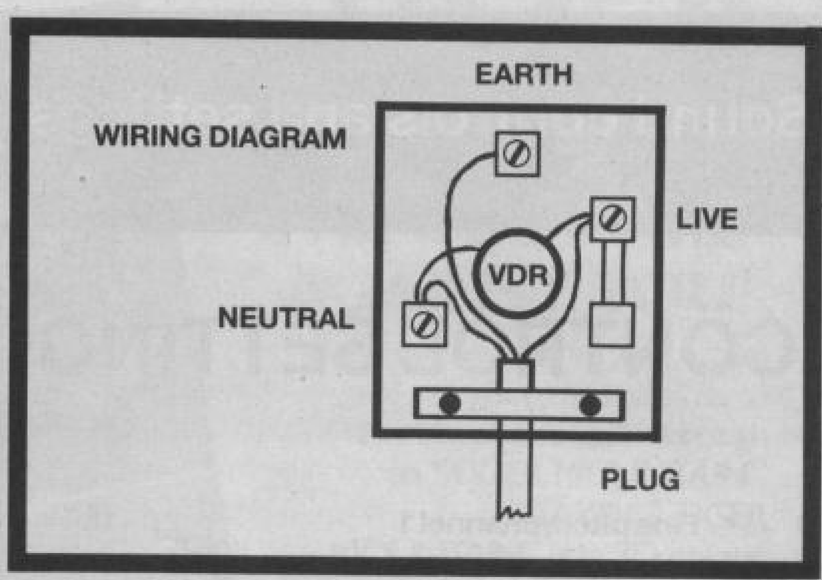
You can probably guess what comes next ... TECH TIPS enthusiast **Al Straker** has written in with details of a simple mains filter that you can knock up for about 50p.

It's not as sophisticated as some commercial models, but it works pretty well on all but the biggest spikes.

SERIOUS BIT

The spike suppressor fits inside your mains plug, home of lethal amounts of electricity. You MUST be very careful when installing it, and follow our instructions precisely. Do not, under any circumstances, start work without consulting an adult first. If in any doubt whatsoever, take advice from an electrician or ignore this project and buy a commercial filter.

Our filter uses a component called a Voltage Dependent Resistor. These devices can be wired between the live and neutral mains wires — the two shorter pins on a 13 amp plug. They take virtually no current at the normal mains voltage, but react very quickly to high-voltage spikes, when they absorb the energy of the spike, 'clipping' it to a low level.



The diagram shows how Al fitted the VDR inside a normal mains plug. Unplug all your equipment and leave it for an hour before you start fiddling around.

It is VITAL to cover the metal legs of the VDR with plastic sleeving from a piece of wire, so that the legs can't touch together.

Check your work and make sure that everything is securely screwed down. When you close the plug make sure that the VDR is not crushed; in a few cases you may need to replace the plug with a different model to ensure this.

If you put a VDR on each part of your system that contains a processor (eg the computer and printer) you should find it noticably more tolerant of interference.

Make certain that you get a 240V component. MAPLIN sell VDRs under the part name HW13, for 48p each — they're also quite widely available from electronics and TV repair shops.

This is an easy project for those who know what they're doing, but it's very dangerous for anyone else. IF IN DOUBT, DON'T TRY IT.

SOUND AND VISION!

One of the main flaws of the Spectrum is the way that everything else stops when sound is produced. Clever tricks with interrupts and short beeps can give the appearance of simultaneous sound and animation, but it is just an illusion; the more sophisticated the sound the slower everything else will become.

The Spectrum 128 — like most other home computers — contains a chip that can generate three sounds without holding up the processor. Unfortunately Sinclair arranged that the PLAY command, and the corresponding ROM routine for machine-coders, should take control of the machine so that nothing can happen at the same time.

Tim Parsons has written in to ask if anything can be done about this; for example, he wants to know how to read the keyboard and play a tune simultaneously. In fact that's quite possible, if you understand the inner working of the 128 sound chip; you still have to send it instructions when you want to change the sound, but it can happily bleep away while you get on with other things. You can even use the sound chip while your 128 is in 48K mode!

The AY-3-8912 sounds are controlled through two Spectrum ports. You can write to these from BASIC or machine code with the OUT instruction.

Values between 0 and 13 may be written to port 65533 — these select between various controls inside the chip. Once you've selected a control, new settings are sent to port 49149. You don't need to re-select the control if you want to change the same setting more than once — but remember that you can only select one control at a time.

Time for a practical example. To avoid typos I'll assume that CONTROL is a variable set to 65533, and SETTING is a variable holding 49149. To sound a loud bleep on channel 1:

OUT CONTROL, 7: OUT SETTING, 62: REM Turn on channel 1

OUT CONTROL, 1: OUT SETTING, 50: REM Set channel 1 pitch

OUT CONTROL, 8: OUT SETTING, 15: REM Set channel 1 volume

To stop the noise, enter:

OUT SETTING, 0

You can control every feature of the chip with similar commands. The various controls, and valid settings, are listed in the table. ▶

Sound controls and settings

CONTROL		SETTING
0	Fine pitch, channel 1	0-15
1	Coarse pitch, channel 1	0-255
2	Fine pitch, channel 2	0-15
3	Coarse pitch, channel 2	0-255
4	Fine pitch, channel 3	0-15
5	Coarse pitch, channel 3	0-255
6	Noise generator pitch	0-31
7	Mixer - see text	0-63
8	Volume, channel 1	0-16
9	Volume, channel 2	0-16
10	Volume, channel 3	0-16
11	Envelope length (coarse)	0-255
12	Envelope length (fine)	0-255
13	Envelope shape	0,4,8-15

This is what you do. First pick your channel, then use its coarse pitch setting to get roughly the right note. Put a value between 0 and 15 into the 'fine' control to get the pitch spot-on. You can control the volume in two different ways — either directly, by writing a value between 0 and 15 to the corresponding volume control, or indirectly by setting the volume for that channel to 16, in which case the volume will be taken from the 'envelope generator'.

The 'envelope generator' is a circuit that makes the volume fluctuate in various ways, as shown in your Spectrum 128 manual. You can choose between ten shapes of fluctuation by adjusting control 13. The settings of control 11 and 12 determine the speed of change, or the 'length' of the envelope, in units of roughly 1/6900 second.

The 'noise' generator produces various varieties of hiss depending upon the setting of control 6.

The only tricky control is number 7 — the mixer. This turns on or off each of the three channels, and selects whether the channel produces noise or a note.

The easiest way to understand it is to assume that the 'normal' setting is 63 — this makes the chip silent. Subtract 1 from this for notes on channel 1. Subtract 2 for notes on channel 2, and 4 (yes, four!) for notes on channel 3. Subtract 8 for noise on channel 1, 16 for noise on channel 2, and 32 for noise on channel 3.

Thus, to put notes on channels 1 and 3 and noise on channel 2, you'd write (63-1-4-16) to control 7; interestingly, this value is also the ultimate answer to the Question of Life, the Universe and Everything.

JOYSTICKS REJUVENATED

This month's £20 of software goes — by a narrow margin — to **DK Armiger**, who's hardware hint costs precisely nothing — as long as you eat canned food! This project breathes new life into abandoned *Quickshot 2* joysticks.

You'll need the lid from a used baked bean tin (or something similar), a couple of paper fasteners (the folding sort with a stud top and two blades underneath), plus a small drill and a knife or pair of strong scissors. (*This column get more like Blue Peter every month!* **— ED**)

DK explains that he's worn out three *Quickshot 2*'s over the last couple of years, and they've all failed for the same reason — blades have snapped off from the thin metal switch assembly. You and I might have chosen another brand of joystick after having this happen once or twice, but DK stuck to the *Quickshot*, which has apparently sold over four million units since its introduction. (I'm not guessing to how many people!)

To fix your stick, undo the screws underneath and take out the circuit board. You should find a piece of bent metal shaped a bit like a propeller, riveted onto the top face of the board. Assuming the Editor hasn't lost it, there will be a picture of a broken switch plate somewhere around this article.

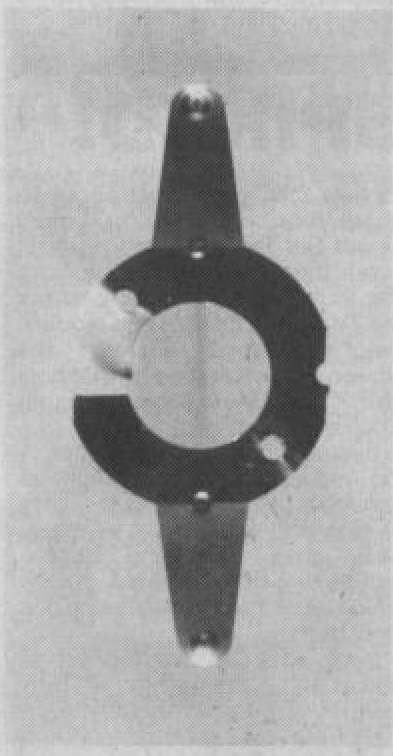
The joystick fails when the blades of the propeller snap off, or the ring holding them together breaks. In either case you must drill out the rivets and remove the metal, replacing it with something more sturdy.

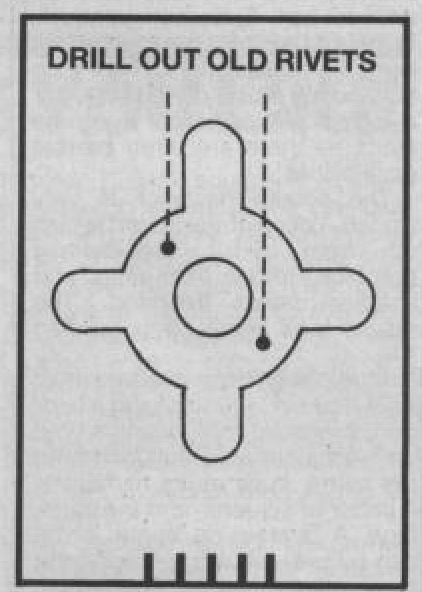
DK has found that a tin lid forms an excellent basis for a new switch. You can use the original part — or what's left of it — as a template when you cut out the replacement; be careful not to cut yourself on the edge of the tin. Then you must drill holes so that the paper fasteners can be used to hold the metal down on the circuit board. Fold the metal blades up to match the original plate, and screw everything back together.

If you've been careful the new arrangement should outlast the original switches.

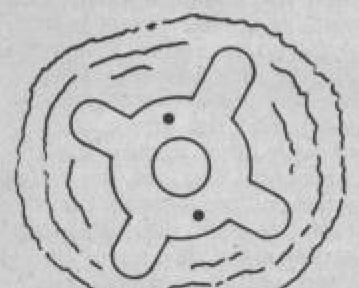
That seems like a good point to stop! Thanks for all your letters; please keep writing to:

TECH TIPS, CRASH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB

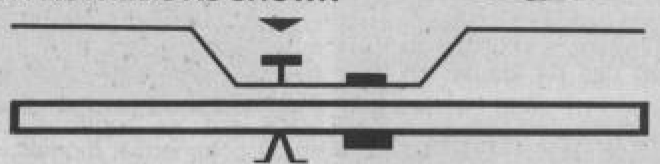




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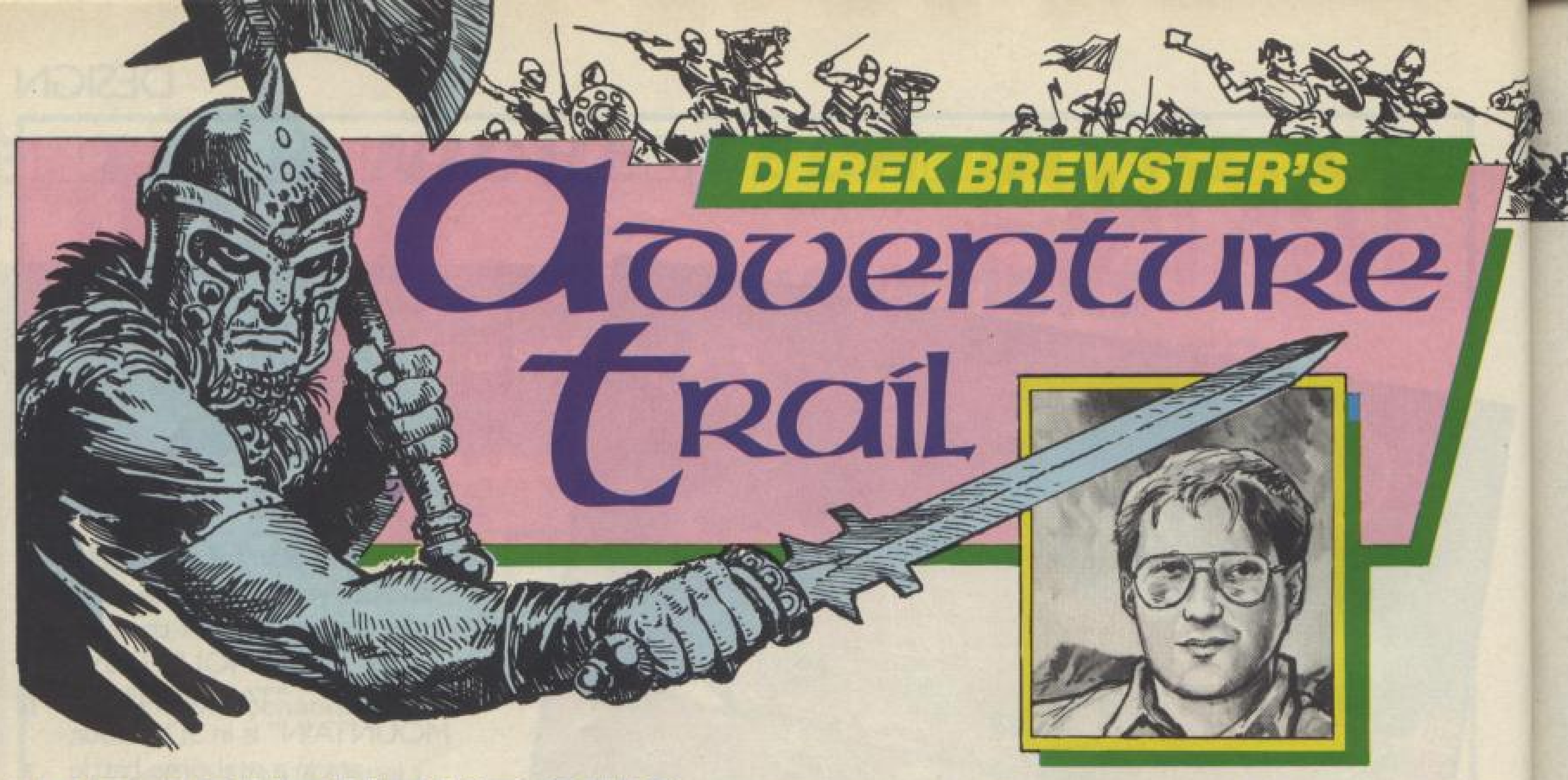
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DEREK BREWSTER'S Adventure Trail

BE ADVENTUROUS

IF YOU TAKE a careful look at the review section this month you will notice every game except Mandragore, a D&D style game written in France, uses The Quill as a means of converting the adventure writer's ideas into code. The Quill is a superb utility for adventure enthusiasts to create their own adventures, and has been used to create some highly commercial games (Hampstead for example), but I think its use by almost every adventure concern will, in time, devalue both the look and feel of the adventure.

Adventuring before The Quill was a far different story. The lack of constraints on format and programming led to a wide range of contrasting styles and made the task of reviewing Spectrum adventures a pleasure; it was never certain what surprise the next postal package would bring. When reviewing the games it became clear there was a fundamental link between the format chosen, the programming techniques used to fulfil the game's tasks, and how good the game fared in the review. With The Quill, no options are allowed on format and programming which leads to cloned adventures sharing fundamental failings, such as in the field of vocabulary. All Quilled games share the same commands and the room for clever manipulation of text is all to evidently lacking.

The Graphic Adventure Creator has no sooner arrived than it, like The Quill, is hailed as an adventuring breakthrough. I would agree with the view that this new program is indeed a superior utility, but it will only create a limited number of topnotch games. This will be due to the lack of inventiveness on behalf of the writer, the same lack of endeavour which caused them to seek the crutch of a utility in the first place. LEVEL 9 have shown with their chart success that own-code adventures are highly respected and it is my guess that many adventure-writing aspirants would be better to seek the services of a moderately competent programmer than plump for the overstated utility.

THE BOGGIT

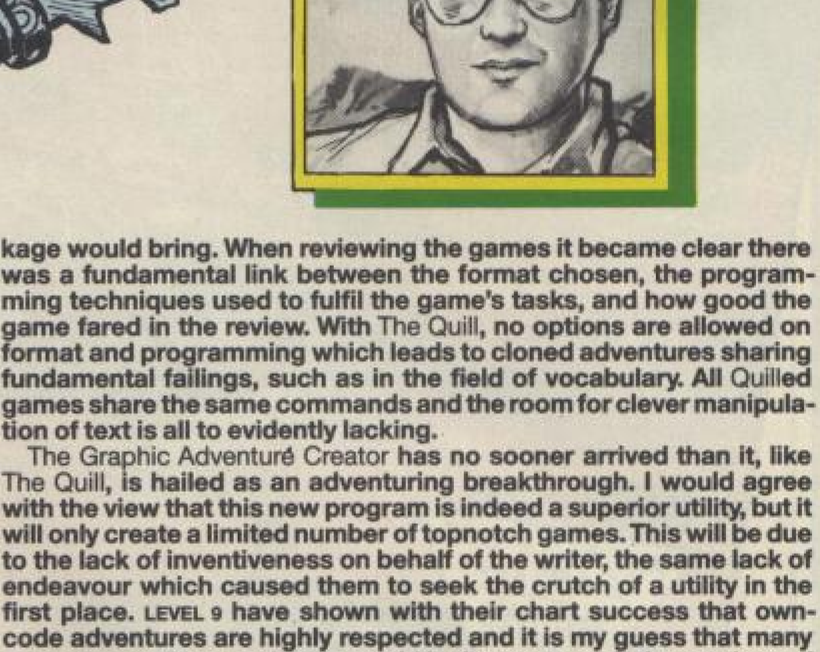
Producer CRL
Price £7.95
Author Delta 4

A CRASH Smash

The name behind DELTA 4 is one Fergus McNeil. He brought you *Robin of Sherlock* and *Bored of the Rings* and now he's waylaying us with his latest offering — *The Boggit, Bored Too* (two, that is). Regulars to the column will remember how I enjoyed both of Fergus's earlier offerings but wondered how universally funny the jokes actually were. In *The Boggit*, the comic genius's talent has been trained, focused and profitably directed towards the one theme — taking *The Hobbit* computer game to the cleaners (although the thought of cleansing isn't quite the right analogy here)!

Everyone who has played *The Hobbit* will find something to laugh at here, and even Tolkien illiterates will realise something funny's going on as Bimbo struggles with supposed friend and foe alike to try and emulate the exploits of Bilbo in the original. This game is awarded a SMASH not just because it is amusing at the expense of a game and a theme familiar to everyone but due to its standing as an adventure — the game reads well, plays well, and the presentation is slick and polished to a tee.

A comfortable tunnel-like hall is Bimbo's home and there's the familiar round green door set in the middle of a very familiar picture not unlike the first frame of *The Hobbit* (remember how DELTA 4 mimicked *Robin of Sherwood* pictures in their last spoof)? OPEN CHEST and 'Bimbo..couldn't quite see inside.' Any adventurer worth his salt will recognise a prompt to action here and so it is that the intrepid explorer clears the first hurdle, but only after dodging the very real threat posed by some glamorous milk choccies accompanied by a card and delivered at great risk. Typically the chocs are explosive and are delivered by none other than that conniving rascal Grandalf: 'Suddenly, there was a resounding crash, and Grandalf



tarzaned in through the window, collapsing elegantly on the floor beside Bimbo. He hastily fumbled about in his robes for something, then placed a box of chocolates and a card carefully on the carpet before scrambling out through the now broken window'. Much longer passages than this pop up throughout the adventure and because they are so well-written add immensely to the fun and atmosphere of the game.

Assuming players can suss the combination lock on the green door and side-step the exploding chocolates they might like to explore the Boggit-hole with the super EXAMINE command. As an example of how full this adventure is let's take the toilet area which one might have assumed to be a bit of a backwater (no rude joke intended). Using this command we learn how the toilet looks a bit dubious, how the sink contains some ancient mouthwash stains, the medicine cabinet to be securely welded shut, and the floor tiles to be a bit wet but otherwise



uninteresting. This is an aspect of adventuring I enjoy very much — the idea that there are many nooks and crannies to explore which may or may not have some direct bearing on the outcome of the adventure. Using the toilet gives rise to the following gem: 'Bimbo tries to make use of the toilet. Suddenly, a huge, bottle-shaped monster reared up out of the bowl and bit him horribly! 'See you soon' it gurgled unpleasantly and sank out of sight'. Before I leave this area of the adventure, a tip to those reading: if you are having difficulty with the combination and can't get out of this bit, type HELP and take the advice literally.

After meeting up with the dwarves, Bimbo is thrust into the middle of a TV quiz show, compared by Grandalf, which poses the question, 'Bimbo Faggins, we have here a 14th share of Thorny's dwarvish treasure. How much do you think it's worth?' The prize for getting this question right is not a breakfast tea service but an extended camping holiday which sounds remarkably like one of those nasty adventure quests with dragons and the ilk. But first Bimbo must get through his hangover from drinking too much dwarvish ale, and Grandalf and Thorny the Dwarf must settle their differences after an argument and fight over Grandalf's tricking Thorny's dad, Drain, out of a key and map leaving the old demented dwarf incarcerated in the necromancers' mental hospital. This imposing building can be found along with many other such sillies on the inside cover of the inlay.

No opportunity has been missed to poke fun at the Tolkien map. Old ford lies opposite a picture of a new Ford uncannily like a Ford Sierra, a new forest trunk road goes nowhere but almost reaches the municipal golf course, and even Ludlow gets a mention along with the likes of Weeble World and The Great River Anadin.

I'll leave you with the first verse of the dwarves' song ringing in your ears.

We're dwarfs, we're dwarfs, all doomed to die
We'll probably finish in the dragon's pie
So we'll take 'ol Bimbo Faggins, a real cement head
Hopefully 'ol Daug will eat him instead
Sing: Hog the gold! Pass the buck!
Split Bimbo's share between us.

Difficulty: very playable but still some tricky bits
Graphics: a few, very average, but pleasant
Presentation: neat redesigned character set, good
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: fast *Quill* response
General rating: good, witty stuff

Atmosphere	92
Vocabulary	86
Logic	83
Addictive quality	94
Overall	**90**

MANDRAGORE

Producer Infogrames
Price **£9.95**

You know, when you've spent some time in the reviewing business you begin to sense good or bad things about a game the moment you load up, or in some cases, even earlier as you start to plough your way through the instructions. As a rule, if the instructions are overly complex or garbled then the game will turn out to be difficult to play and, more annoyingly, not worth playing in any case.

Mandragore is one of those game which is so messy that the first indication is that on checking your characters they would all appear to have expired, and you have a game that goes out of its way to annoy and perplex rather than engage and entertain.

That said, I somehow mustered the patience to get somewhere with this one and discovered an adventure heavily based upon *Dungeons and Dragons*. The structure of the game is novel, what with its main game code on



one cassette and data relating to each one of ten chateaux on another. When the data pertaining to a chateaux is needed, signalled by a prompt on the screen, this data is then loaded from its position on the other cassette.

Syrela's Adventure is the first of three options offered at the start, the other two being *Your Adventure*, where you form your own team via a questionnaire which appears on screen, and *Old Adventure* which is the option to allow a saved game to be resumed (restarting a game left off in a chateaux involves reloading the castle you were in at the end of the previous game).

Syrela's Adventure is recommended for the novice, as here a previously selected team of four characters is offered already ascribed names, races, occupations, gender and characteristics. These last are the familiar *D&D* labels or pseudonyms Constitution, Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Dexterity and Appearance. *D&D* aficionados will quickly equate this game's Knowledge with *D&D's* Intelligence, and similarly, Appearance with Charisma. These are given values between 5 and 20 and never exceed 80 in total. In addition, each team member begins with 50 life points, 20 food points, 50 money points and no experience. The Level, which starts at one, is an indication of the maturity where a higher level signifies a more invincible character who is better able to undertake hazardous and difficult deeds.

The choice of race shows the greatest deviation from *D&D* with the non-standard Mi-Orc and Obbit along with the more familiar Dwarf, Elf and Human. Occupations are more in line with *D&D* terminology with Warrior, Ranger (Strength must be above 15), Wizard (Intelligence above 15), Cleric (high Wisdom), and Thief (high Dexterity needed). Minstrel is thrown in for good measure and this occupation involves an Appearance above that magic figure of fifteen. The Strength of a Ranger, the Dexterity of a Thief, and the Intelligence of a Wizard can have a great bearing on a game we are told, but I defy anyone to keep awake long enough to find out if this is true.

Games play centres around the screen map which is the localised version of a full map in the middle of the instruction booklet. Crude character block scrolling is the order of the day and the graphics depicting the monotonous stretches of plains, forests, hills, swamps and mountains are uninspiring to say the least. Your team is represented by a solitary figure who resolutely stays in the centre

games where the overly involved instructions are a sign of confusion over where the game begins and where it is going, if anywhere. Perhaps some of the fault lies in the translation as **INFOGRAMES** are a French outfit (hence the 'chateaux' in the instructions) but this can only be part of the excuse as the instructions are readable. It's just that they are constructed in a way as to make reading them at least three times a must before any proper attempt can be made at the game.

The player's attempts to come to terms with the game's complexities are further frustrated by the mixing of Commodore, Amstrad, Apple and MSX instructions (including disc information) with those for the little old Spectrum. Throw in one or two other major irritations like characters that disappear on screen because they have parts that are the same colour as the background (surely unforgivable) and an ending to the



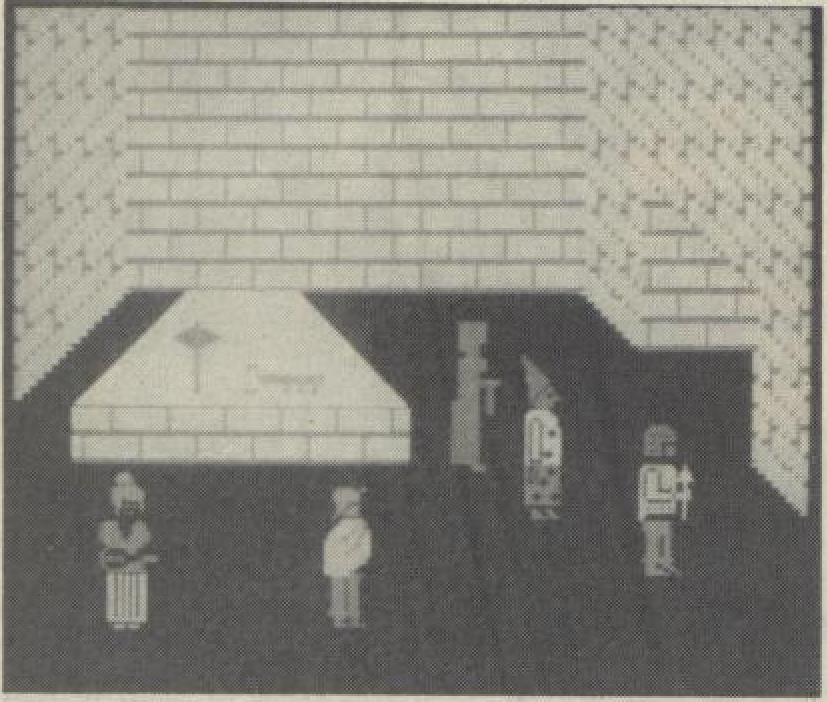
of the map as all scrolls about him. This Map Mode, as the instructions call it, is used primarily to move from one chateaux or village to the other.

Before long the next mode, Wandering Monsters, is called upon as you bump into your assailants while innocently hiking around the map. The trouble with this mode are the pictures of the monsters which are teletext resolution and often so poor it's impossible to say what exactly is attacking you ('is it a bird? is it a fish?' kind of thing). Destroying the monster you can return to map mode or you can skip the whole boring thing, return directly to map mode and forfeit 10 life points for each character.

The villages and chateaux form the third major mode with the villages providing an opportunity to buy (or steal) weapons, torches and food or to sell things found in the course of expeditions inside the chateaux. The ten chateaux contain about 30 rooms and dungeons each concealing a mystery to be solved and monster traps to avoid.

status list down the right flank of the screen completes your input. (A — D normally consist of one monster and one or more objects). There is one major proviso in using the verbs from the lists supplied: certain verbs are occupation specific — for instance, only a Cleric can CURE and a Wizard TELEPORT — while other verbs are location specific so you must be in a village in order to STEAL, BUY or BARTER. For these reasons early inputs seem to more often than not end with the word 'Impossible' as the program's only retort. When the input system is finally sussed things can still be tricky, like when trying to buy equipment in the villages when everything seems priced well above the starting 50 monies of each character.

Mandragore is an adventure which clearly has had a lot of hard work put into its inception. Like any *D&D* clone it has a depth and complexity way beyond the normal microcomputer game. The garbled and hotch-potch instructions are infuriating — the last thing an



The way in which the game makes use of abbreviations and one touch entry is clever but marred by the fact that the instructions do not distinguish between CAPS SHIFT and SYMBOL SHIFT. Where the instructions say that SHIFT 0 brings up the name, experience points and life points tally of each character onto the right flank of the screen it is here referring to SYMBOL SHIFT. Where they refer to SHIFT and cursor arrows they mean the CAPS SHIFT. To be honest, if you were to struggle through the instructions to this stage as I did, this state of affairs would not surprise you as most of the early part of getting to know this game consists of pressing keys at random, so confusing are the instructions! But to give credit where credit is due the input system, once mastered, is quite fun.

Pressing 1 — 4 brings down a character name, pressing the first two letters of a verb (from a kindly supplied list) brings this down next to it while pressing A — D from the

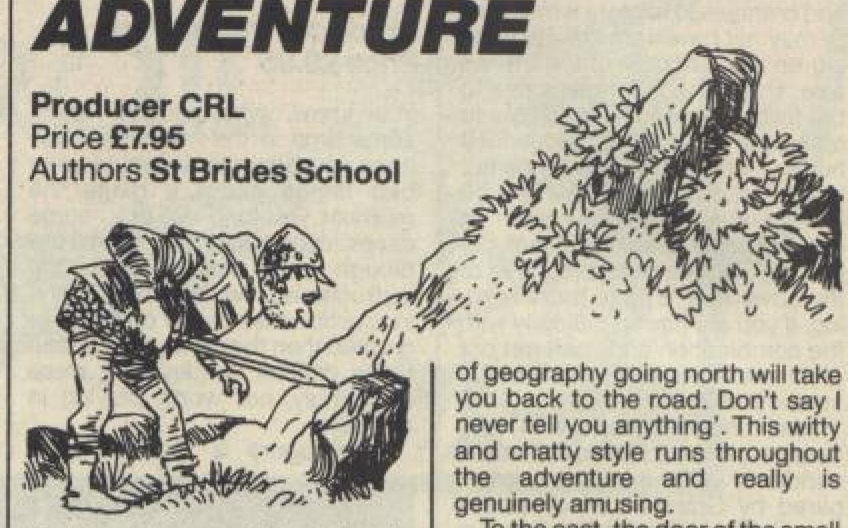
already complex game needs as an introduction. However, I think that once the player gets over this hurdle the game proves to have a great deal to offer and those interested in role-playing games on the Spectrum should certainly take the time to get to know and enjoy this one.

Difficulty: poor instructions necessitate a slow start
Graphics: poor
Presentation: average
Input facility: novel and highly effective
Response: fast
General rating: good attempt at true *D&D* type game

Atmosphere	70
Vocabulary	88
Logic	85
Addictive quality	78
Overall	**79**

THE VERY BIG CAVE ADVENTURE

Producer CRL
Price **£7.95**
Authors **St Brides School**



Right, you've seen this one in the shops and you now want to know how good it is. Well, it is *Quill*ed, it's from the ST BRIDES team who have turned out some average to good but hardly commercial adventures. It reaches you in the shops courtesy of CRL, a company which has little history in mainstream adventuring, but, I am pleased to say, they are now releasing some imaginative stuff.

Well, all in all it's pretty good, what with its humorous treatise of *Colossal Cavern*, the mainframe yarn that was the inspiration of many an early Spectrum adventure, and its quickly drawn graphics and powerful EXAMINE command. Considering its size (it comes in two parts) its price could be justified, but I consider it to be a shade on the expensive side.

You must excuse me if I seem to plod through this review. Like an editorial which went west recently, the first version of the *Big Cave* review similarly went astray somewhere between the Far North and the Middlemass of Ludlow. Exactly as forecast by a certain well-known law, my backup copy flew out of the window when I moved house (which itself is another equally well-known sub law which states that when moving house anything you value is either lost or broken whereas the junk mysteriously survives — usually at ankle or knee height in dark corridors).

Now, where was I, oh yes, the small brick building of the **Crowther** and **Woods** original. NORTH takes you to a secret hiding place (apparently on the Spectrum version only) curiously marked by a large and conspicuously flashing sign. Here are the first examples of the superb EXAMINE command where EXAM FOOD elicits 'It's a school dinner' (described as 'tasty' in the inventory!) while EXAM BOTTLE gives 'Green. Originally one of ten.' Travelling west takes the mickey out of all illogically mapped adventures whereby you find yourself on top of a small hill. 'Well, not that small. I notice you are out of breath and perspiring freely so I hope you will not fuss when I tell you that that this hill plays no particular part in the adventure and I have no idea why it's here. Contrary to the laws of geography going north will take you back to the road. Don't say I never tell you anything'. This witty and chatty style runs throughout the adventure and really is genuinely amusing.

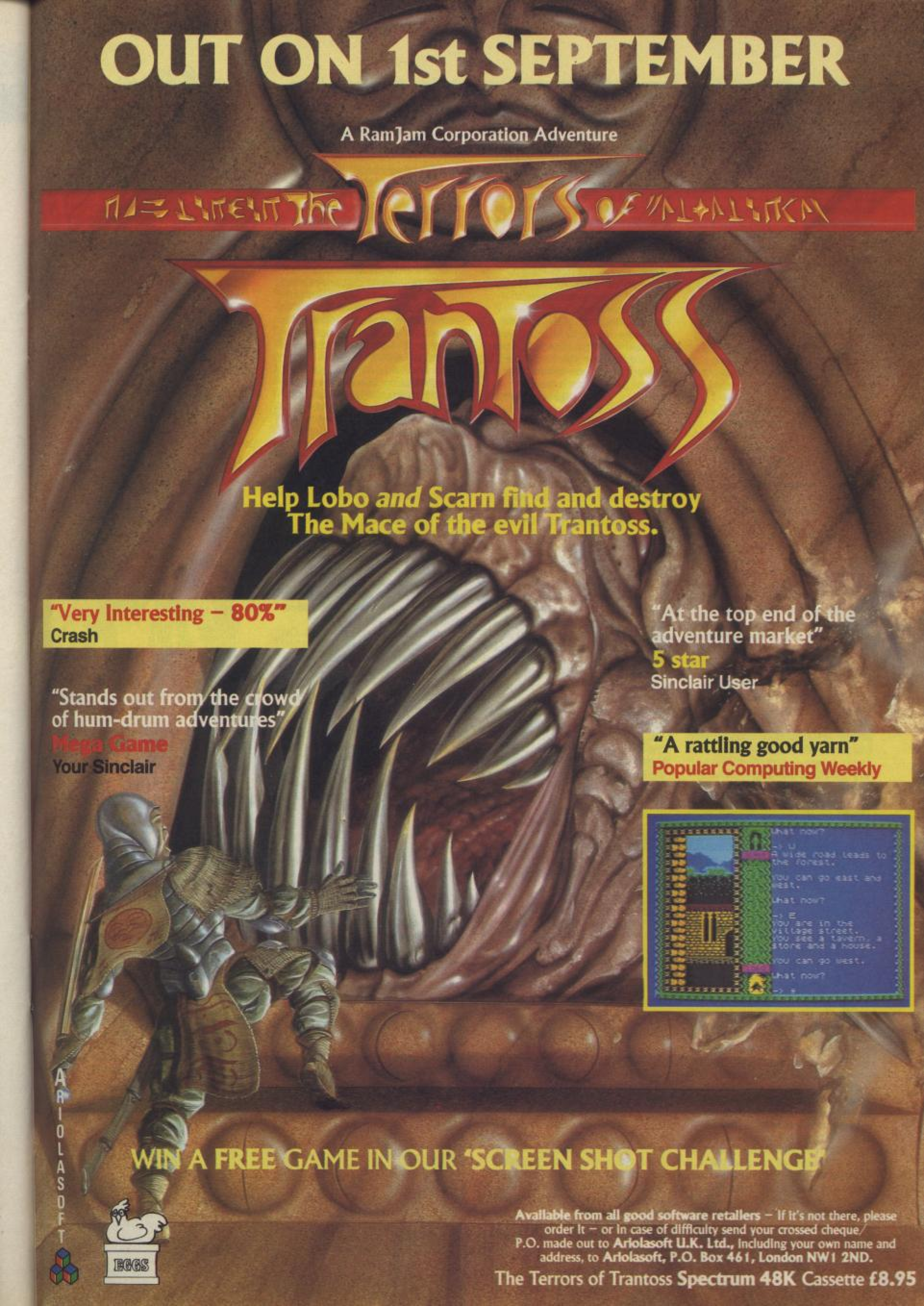
To the east, the door of the small brick building is closed and something prevents it from opening. Examining the door reveals the problem. 'You see a brass mechanism attached to the door bearing the legend: VACANT. There is an aperture at the top of the mechanism approximately the thickness and diameter of one penny'. This carefully weighted style of writing nicely deposits the joke in your lap, a strength of the game I particularly enjoyed.

To the south of the start location, in a gully in the forest, you chance upon a Gully-Bull which, true to its name, is highly gullible and lets you steal the old penny there right from under its nose. Back to the wellie house and you discover the spring is not the watery kind but the springy kind — springing you out of the place should you touch it. Taking on the bull again you read 'And you can see a rampaging bull with the distinct air of a bull who does not mean to be caught out a second time'.

Not all the adventure is directly concerned with *Colossal Cavern*. It's true that much of what's here is familiar, even if it has been given a new twist. The wellie-house is the original well house with its watery spring, the python of *Big Cave* being the snake of the original, and in this adventure the Ming vase is not dropped on the cushion as you might expect; instead dropping it anywhere else does the trick. Other themes running through this humorous trip are the caped crusaders of Gotham City, Alice in Wonderland, and lesser interludes like text-powered space invaders and a horror section. Certainly the *Big Cave Adventure* offers a great deal; it's not only a super spoof but a polished and well orchestrated adventure in its own right.

Difficulty: flows along nicely
Graphics: mostly attractive
Presentation: neat
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: *Quill*
General rating: good jaunt

Atmosphere	80
Vocabulary	85
Logic	83
Addictive quality	81
Overall	**82**



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The Terrors of Trantoss Spectrum 48K Cassette £8.95

Can I just take this space here to thank everyone who wrote in to SIGNPOST this month — the quality of letters has been very high and touched upon many varied and interesting topics. Please keep sending in your views on whatever issue the column as a whole raises (including the opening Editorial) as I find reading your views most rewarding.

Could I also ask puzzled adventurers to keep on submitting requests to STUMPS but to understand the solution to their problem may already have been given in a previous issue and it would be unfair to readers with all the back copies to keep on going over the same ground. Also, would you please note SIGNSTUMPS is a magazine column and not a personal service and on no account should a self-addressed envelope be included with your query. Far better to pinch a bit of glory and see your name in print! Before mentioning a book to help you play a game, I would also like to thank those many people who send in tips and solution sheets for tough adventures; your help is invaluable in compiling THE monthly guide to Spectrum adventuring.

Now, that book I mentioned — Yes there is a full paperback book published by CENTURY COMMUNICATIONS ***and written by*** John Lambshead ***and*** Gordon Paterson ***on the philosophy and reasoning behind playing the game of the book by*** Frederick Forsyth. THE FOURTH PROTOCOL — PLAYING THE GAME ***will give enthusiasts the best possible guide to play.***

DB

MICRODIVE

Dear Derek,
I have just read your introduction to the ADVENTURE TRAIL and feel I must come to the defence of the humble Microdrive you so viciously attacked.

You say that the Microdrive is unreliable, fickle, wears the tape quickly, regularly eats the tape, and is slow. I really must take issue with these statements.

I own 2 Microdrives and have over 25 cartridges, and have been using them regularly for over two years. They are used nearly every day, and are extremely reliable.

In the two years I have been using them only once has a program failed to load. If this isn't reliable I don't know what is, when you consider the abysmal record of turbo loaders.

I know the tapes aren't supposed to last very long, but even the demonstration cartridge I have from the first Microdrive is still working perfectly with no appreciable decrease in loading speed. Neither of my two Microdrives have ever chewed a cartridge but I will admit that loops of tape are sometimes present when they are removed. This is not a problem, since warning of this phenomena is given with every cartridge. Just think how many standard cassette tapes have been chewed to pieces by even the most expensive recording equipment.

As for your comment on speed, I will concede that the Microdrive is not of much use for small blocks of code, but considering the average loading time of a cassette is 4 minutes, then even 30 seconds from a Microdrive cannot be a bad speed.

The Microdrive is invaluable when developing large programs. Just think how long it takes to save and verify a modified program to cassette in case it crashes when tested. I can only think that if you have had experience of Microdrives and still write an attack like you did, then either you had a bad Microdrive or you are to blame for not using it with care.

G Poole, Durham

I've noticed Sir Clive recently saying how he thought the Microdrive was one of his better inventions, and so it was, it's just I still can't get over loosing KENTILLA***'s source code on the Spectrum when I rather foolishly opted for it as a means of program development.***

DB

BASIL'S FAULTY

Dear Sir,
Just when I had completely forgotten that I owned a copy of that wretched *Sherlock* you had to go and print a couple of hints on how to get some sense out of Scotland Yard's resident showroom dummy, Lestrade. I am referring to the immortal words 'BASIL HAS PLANS' and 'SALE LOCATION IN OLD MILL ROAD'. I thought that the speaking of these would finally earn me a ride in the fabled Police Hansom Cab but, oh deary me no, all I received was exactly the same thing that had banished the game to the very bottom of my games cupboard in the first place — dumb, moronic silence and apathy.

I bought the damned game on the day it came out and within three weeks had arrived at the point I am still at now. I have searched every inch of Leatherhead, found all books, bloodstained clothes, letters, notes, guns, rocks, unconscious Bobbies, records, sheetmusic. I have saved Percy Ffoulkes from being gunned down by the trigger-happy lawman. I have confronted Tricia Fender in her lair and watched her metamorphosis into Mrs Jones. I have carted the same off to the nick and got Lestrade to book the dog-breathed creep, Murder 1. Recently I've even tried a variation on this — letting her go scot-free. My mercy went unrewarded. The furthest I managed to get was Lestrade saying he didn't believe the sale location was in Old Mill Road. He wanted evidence but the various coded notes prompted only exactly the same response.

I have infiltrated Basil's HQ and found all his coded notes and decyphered the lot. I have presented Lessy with all the evidence, including the empty folder and unfinished blackmail note and the stupid bleeder took no interest whatsoever. It was, after several extremely boring hours, at this point that I gave up, seemingly years ago, I realised all that was required was the luck to hit on whatever phrase was in the programmer's mind when he wrote the tortured, pedantic thing but being unable to come up with it I gave up in extreme irritation and consigned the whole debacle to the darkest corner of my collection.

Now, today, dear Mr Brewster, I received what was supposed to be the answer. Having nothing better to do I decided, once and for all, to finish the 'game' off, being spurred on by the curse of the adventurer, the desire to see what is in the hidden location. Having long ago lost track of which cassette I sayed my progress on I had to painstakingly work my way through the whole thing again. Being aware from painful experience that if you stray off the straight and narrow in this task you risk being crashed upon, I followed the hints given by you so far and finally reached the great, supreme moment when I would enter 'BASIL HAS PLANS'.

As I suspected, precisely nothing happened. Ol' Lessy asked for proof. I gave him proof in the form of the relevant coded note. He ignored it. He also ignored the sale of plans bit. On trying again (after it had crashed) he decided that he had 'other cases to think about'. What are they? Pray tell. Is he a traitor? Isn't the bovine bobby at all concerned that the secret military plans are about to be sold? How do you get Lestrade to take action against Phipps?

R V Barnes, Kent

Err, well, quite . . . yes. Errr. . . . wait a minute, who sent in that tip anyway? (phew, that was close). Joking apart, I can't remember getting a complete solution to SHERLOCK ***so come on you budding Holmses, let's have it. Anyhow, Mr Faulty, I mean Mr Barnes, surely you could have found something better to do, like watch grass grow, observe paint drying . . . and there's always restful sleep and television for the really active mind.***

DB



WHO OWNS THE SMURFS?

Dear Derek,
I was reading your review on *The Prisoner* (Issue 30) and the comments you made about the copyrights made by the entertainment companies on programs. Could you please tell me if this includes using characters from films, books and TV. In a program such as *Robin of Sherlock*, with characters such as

S·U·P·E·R·H·E·R·O·E·S

Once again the response to the call for new Superheroes has been superb. This month three super adventurers have risen to the challenge and completed three new adventures in record time.

"After destroying the Arcadian computers using the atomic battery implanted into the elmonite explosive this message appears on the screen: 'You hear the muffled crump of an explosion. The Queen of Arcadian has been destroyed and with her, the will of all Arcadians. Their empire is over, Earth is free! You've done it!'. I Completed the game on July 22 at 11.47am". ***So writes*** H Hill ***of Surrey who is hereby nominated the*** REBEL PLANET ***SUPERHERO.***

Craig Davies ***of Hambleton, Lancs completed the Atlantis game*** MAFIA CONTRACT II ***on Saturday June 28 only 5 hours after buying the game.*** "After slaughtering Capolla and Rossi, a black cadillac draws up with Machine-gun Lovey and two other hit men inside. A large graphic draws out saying 'Well Done' and the following message appears 'Congratulations. You are now the boss of the two most powerful Mafia gangs in the entire city. You run an empire worth £100 Million per year . . . tax free. There are approximately 500 professional drug pushers, hitmen and loansharks at your disposal. Al Capone



Watson, The Smurfs, Robin, Little John and so on? I have just started on my own game and would like to know the limitations I should be aware of when using such characters.
Ian Carter, Castleford, W Yorks

Generally, material taken from books is protected by copyright for 50 years after the death of the author. Hence you will need permission from the copyright owners before you sell games based on such works. Of the characters you mention only The Smurfs are protected by copyright. Arthur Conan Doyle, who wrote Sherlock Holmes, died in 1930 whilst Robin Hood is from legend. Many books which are protected by copyright use characters and names from legend, for instance, Orcs and Trolls in Lord of the Rings are from legend so you can use them in your game but Hobbits from the same book were invented by Tolkien and so can't be used, hence the reason why Hobbits in D&D are called Halflings. After saying all this I must emphasize that I am not a legal expert and the above is simply how I see the copyright laws. Neither CRASH or myself can be held responsible for any errors in the above statement!
DB

CELERY'S NOT SOFT

Dear Derek,
I was most thrilled to see the review of my far-from-excellent game, though I was a little surprised that you forgot to mention a few certain points such as each of CELERYSOFT's five members are only fifteen, or that 50p of each game *Space Detective* sold goes to Ethiopia. You also omitted our address which is disastrous, for CELERYSOFT has not the means to distribute games via shops. Who knows, someone out there might have wanted to check out our amazing sense of humour.
J Sharp, Celerysoft
Slough House
Bishop's Nympton
South Molton
North Devon
EX36 4NZ

I like your style
DB

would have been proud of you. Just don't abuse your power, it may be fun at the top . . . but it's a long way to fall from!!' My score was 100%."

"On the 9th of June 1986 at 10.10 pm we completed SEABASE DELTA. We received the message 'Well done Ed!! What a story this is going to make!'. ***So write a couple of intrepid SUPERHEROES from Braintree in Essex who go by the names of*** Richard ***and*** Stephen Hammond, ***not forgetting*** Mark Woodward. ***Sounds like quite a team effort by the trio!***

That's all the hero worship for this month but no doubt all that summer holiday rain will bring a whole flood of unabashed heroes for next issue.

JOURNEY'S END

Dear Derek,
I am an arcade game player. I have few adventure games (*Valhalla, Hobbit, Eric the Viking,* and *Journey's End*) and can conquer none but I have some hints and tips for *Journey's End*:
1 Don't drink potions; collect any books you see and collect men with strengths 48, 49 and 50.
2 Stay on hunting mode and give food to the weakest people.
3 Never drink potions and give spells and magic weapons to the strongest men.
4 Put everyone in the front line and use the shield where possible.
5 Put the same number hand-to-hand in frontline as enemy's frontline.
6 When sleep =16 go to sleep picking the two strongest to keep watch.
7 Get the objects: bridge, magic weapon, strength, arrows, food from a golden tree (in order of importance).
8 Don't use teleports and as soon as you get under the chest press the numbers from 1 to 0 as quickly as possible.
9 If you destroy Angus (no, not Ryall) the dragon, you will be asked three questions.
G Owen, Co Armagh

Thanks, Gareth, it's always good to have tips for the lesser known games.
DB

This month's software prize (a truly staggering £20 worth) goes to the chap who sounds like he could use it. Go on Mr Barnes, get yourself some bug-free software which will wipe out the memory of THAT program.

SIGN STUMPS

SEABASE DELTA ***has proved one of the most popular games for SIGNSTUMPS this month.*** Darren Douves ***of Orpington, Kent asks:***

"Where is the pen full of ink?
Where is the bowl to mix the pancake?
How do you get to the old wreck?
Where's the foil?
Where's the tape to put into the tape recorder in the electronic workshop?
Where's the hammer, plank of wood, nails and barrel?
Where's the slimy green key to open the pond at lift two and where's the speaker magnet?
How do you get onto the conveyor belt when going left?"

You get the ink for the pen by shooting the octopus and filling the pen with the ink.
You get to the old wreck via the hatch, but first it is a good idea to have the wet suit, air bottle and flippers. You will find objects in the wreck to help you progress. The speaker magnet is, as you would guess, in the speaker. To get onto the belt you must DMJNC POUP CFMU.

Patrick Scullion ***of Felling, Tyne and Wear writes:***

"Could you please help me solve some problems on SEABASE DELTA?
1 How do you get the disc from the shaft?
2 What ingredients are needed to make the pancake?
3 What do you make with the hammer, nails and plank of wood?
4 How do you get the object out of the barrel of the cannon?
5 What's the barrel used for?"

To make a pancake you will need an egg, milk and flour as well as a bowl to mix them in. The hammer, nails, plank and barrel are used to MAKE A SEESAW. To get the object out of the cannon, use the plank to lever the cannon.

David Carr ***of Blackburn writes:***

"In a past issue, you said to use the staff to pass the ward of disintegration in KENTILLA. How exactly do you use the staff because nothing I've tried will work."

To activate the staff TBZ TBHBHPP, the clue is seen by examining the emerald in the absence of light.

TERRORMOLINOS ***is proving as popular as ever this summer.*** A Massouras ***pleads:***

"Help! I'm stuck in TERRORMOLINOS. When I get to the airport I get the game over sign because I haven't got my suitcase with me. Where is it anyway?"

The suitcase is in the attic, you will need the stepladders to get through the hatch.

Other holiday makers have reached their destination but are having difficulty getting decent pictures. Philip May ***of Cardiff is having problems at the bullfight while*** John Cooper ***of Spennymoor, Durham is in difficulty at the monastery.***

To get to the bull fight go to the coach station and enter GO BULLFIGHT. After Beryl has taken a picture you will see that Ken is in trouble in the bull ring. Go N into ring, UNTIE HANKY and WAVE HANKY, the bull will now be after you. Now go to the village were you can lose the bull in the china shop. At the Monastery take a picture from the top of the bell tower. To find Mr Snargsby go to the catacombs and wander around until you find him, then CALL SNARGSBY and find your way back to the coach.

ENCRYPTION CORNER
It's easy to speak Brewster!

ENGLISH:	ZABCDEFGHIJKL
BREWSTER:	ABCDEFGHIJKLM
ENGLISH:	MNOPQRSTUVWXY
BREWSTER:	NOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Mick Buckley ***of Blackthorn, Northampton asks:***

"Please, Please tell me what to do on the industrial estate in HAMPSTEAD? I enter the estate and then seem to be able to do nothing else and do not seem to be able to leave."

You should find the bracket in the estate. To find it go N, E, E, NE, E, E, NE and N. SW will now take you back to the entrance.

Christopher Manley ***from Norwich writes:***

"Please assist me on some adventures that I am currently stuck with:
TOWER OF DESPAIR
How do I pass Shadow Gate. I'm sure I need something from the ring of skulls but am unable to enter.
KENTILLA
How do I open the Urga-mauls treasure room as neither the large or small key fits the lock.
HAMPSTEAD
How do I open the filing cabinet. I'm sure there must be something to help me in the department store, but I can't find anything."

I'm afraid I don't know the answer to your first question and I would be very greatful if someone could provide some help. The Large Key should open the treasure room door. Try entering OPEN GREEN (or whatever colour it is!) WITH LARGE KEY. In HAMPSTEAD ***you are right, there is an object in the department store that will help you. PQFO EFTL, HFU TDSFXESJWFS. You can now GPSDF DBCJOFU.***

Finally, in reply to the question asked in the July issue on how to open the crate in SORCERER OF CLAYMORGUE CASTLE, Mrs J Porteous ***writes:***

"You don't actually open it, but if you take it up to the loft with you then THROW CRATE FROM LOFT it can then be investigated (after first completing the other things necessary while under the bliss spell (going to lava etc).
When ready, GO CRATE, GO HOLE, GET METAL, GO HOLE, GET OFF CRATE, should do it. (The metal is the tin opener needed to open the tin can.).

That's all there is time for this month. Keep sending any questions you have as well as any help you have to offer to:

SIGNSTUMPS
PO BOX 10
LUDLOW
SHROPSHIRE
SY8 1DB

1986 PBM MAILBOX

This month, BRENDON KAVANAGH takes a look at another game run by KJC, appeals for details of your experiences as a criminal of the future, and reveals that a souped up version of VORCON WARS is now available. All this, while playing IT'S A CRIME!



The offer of a free *It's A Crime!* startup made in the July issue by KJC GAMES has attracted an impressive response from all of you budding PBMers. So many CRASH readers wrote in that a new game of *It's A Crime!* was launched last month to accommodate you all!

I've joined in the mayhem on the streets of New York, and so far have managed to win control of a couple more blocks and gain half a dozen new recruits to my gang in the process . . .

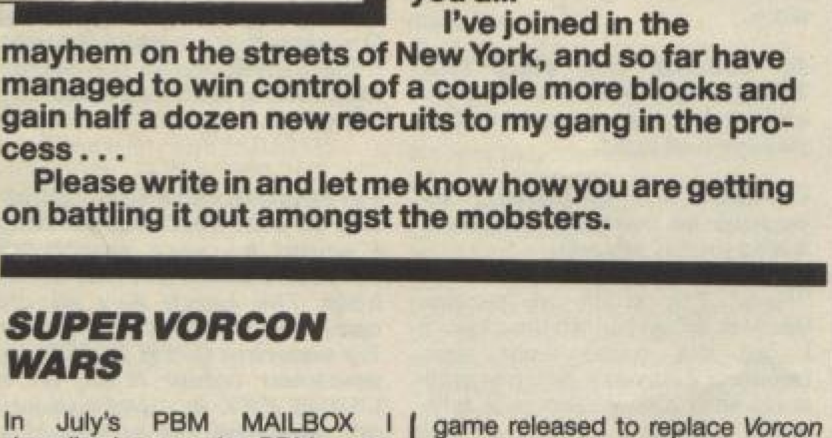
Please write in and let me know how you are getting on battling it out amongst the mobsters.

SUPER VORCON WARS

In July's PBM MAILBOX I described a popular PBM game called *Vorcon Wars*. **John Nicholson**, creator of the aforementioned game, has recently launched a more complicated version which involves infectious diseases destroying food supplies, multi-commander player positions, more aggressive native Vorcons and other such wonders. John, demonstrating an impressive spurt of originality and imagination, has named this game *Super Vorcon Wars*. *SVW* is not a game released to replace *Vorcon Wars*, it is intended to let players who want to do more than they can in the original game do so — just because the game is called *Super Vorcon Wars* it doesn't mean that it's any better . . .

SVW costs £1.50 per turn to play and further details can be obtained from **SUPER VORCON WARS, 59 Juniper, Birch Hill, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 4ZG.**

I shall discuss the game more thoroughly in a later issue.



CAPITOL

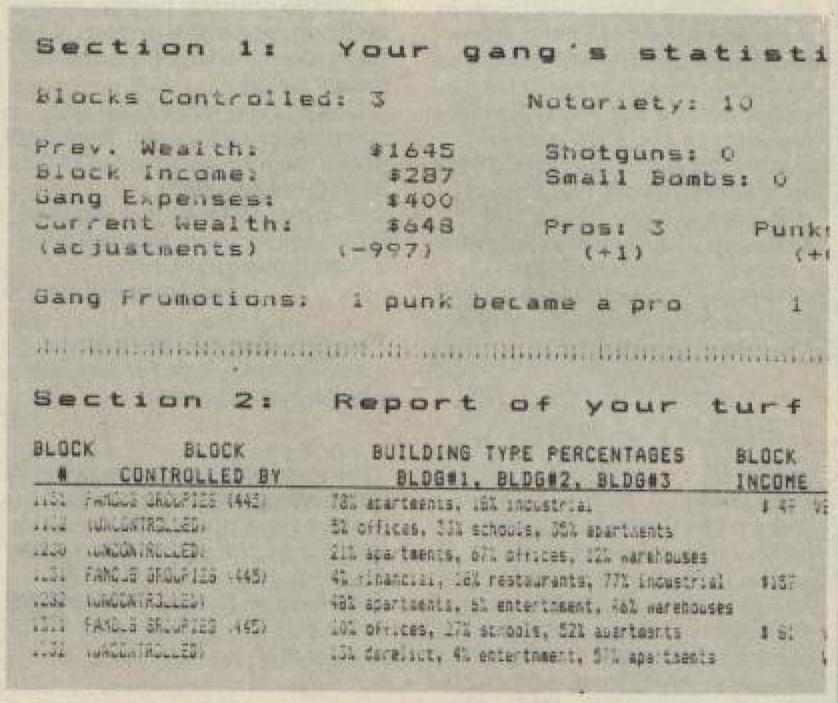
Capitol is an American PBM game, moderated on computer in the UK by KJC GAMES, the people who moderate *It's A Crime*.

This is a game of interstellar empire building which is very strategic and diplomatic in play. There are 32 players per game who represent, as teams of four individual game positions, eight unique races. At the start of the game, each player is given a world and a few starships with which to begin exploring the two dimensional in which play takes place. The player must conquer new worlds to expand the empire's industrial and political base, and new starships for fighting, exploration, and carrying cargo can be crudely designed and built once extra resources have been annexed.

KJC GAMES is a well run organisation which runs its games in quite a professional manner. According to the rulebook, games generally last for between nine and eighteen months — who knows, within a year you could be the conqueror of a whole galaxy!

HINTS ON PLAY

Capitol involves a lot of diplomacy, especially between players of the same race (even though you are all struggling to be Emporer you must also remember how important it is to work together against the other races!). This means that quite a bit of real world communication is needed to do well in *Capitol*. For convenience (and to save money on stamps and large telephone bills; two sad facts of life for the overactive diplomat) it may be an idea for a group of four friends to join all at once and agree to co-operate as a race (this means that on startup you must all choose to play as the same race). You all play as individuals as normal: it just makes interplayer communications easier and more enjoyable!



Section 1: Your gang's statisti

Blocks Controlled: 3 Notoriety: 10

Prev. Wealth:	$1645	Shotguns: 0	
Block Income:	$287	Small Bombs: 0	
Gang Expenses:	$400		
Current Wealth:	$648	Pros: 3	Punk
(adjustments)	(-997)	(+1)	(+

Gang Promotions: 1 punk became a pro 1

Section 2: Report of your turf

BLOCK #	BLOCK CONTROLLED BY	BUILDING TYPE PERCENTAGES BLDG#1, BLDG#2, BLDG#3	BLOCK INCOME
[illegible]	FAMOUS GROUPIES (445)	70% apartments, 16% industrial	$ 47
[illegible]	(UNCONTROLLED)	5% offices, 33% schools, 35% apartments	
[illegible]	(UNCONTROLLED)	21% apartments, 67% offices, 12% warehouses	
[illegible]	FAMOUS GROUPIES (445)	4% financial, 16% restaurants, 77% industrial	$157
[illegible]	(UNCONTROLLED)	48% apartments, 5% entertainment, 46% warehouses	
[illegible]	FAMOUS GROUPIES (445)	10% offices, 17% schools, 52% apartments	$ 8
[illegible]	(UNCONTROLLED)	13% derelict, 4% entertainment, 57% apartments	

Bases may be established on other worlds which confer commercial, economic, and political benefits (and, perhaps, disadvantages). These bases must be maintained and supplied to keep them operational.

GOALS

There are two goals for the players of *Capitol* to achieve. The first is to construct and develop the most powerful base of your race; the player who owns the most powerful base being the race Emperor (until deposed!).

The second is to work with the other players of the same race to annihilate the 'aliens' — in other words, get rid of the other players. As you can see, the political aspect of *Capitol* is an interesting one where groups of competing players must also ally to destroy the other races before they themselves are destroyed! There's a lot of scope for stabbing people in the back in this game..

TURNAROUND

Capitol is an open-ended game and players may submit turns as often as they like up to a maximum of once per week (a ten day limit game exists for European players).

START UP

The impressive *Capitol* Rules Package (containing all sorts of goodies) costs £2, excluding startup. £6 pays for the Rules package, game set up, and your first two turns. Turncosts thereafter can vary slightly, but usually each turn costs £1.75.

European applications should be sent to: **CAPITOL CRASH STARTUP, KJC Games, PO Box 11, Cleveleys, Lancashire FY5 2UL.**

THE FLAGSHIP FACTORS

DIPLOMACY	5
COMPLEXITY	**2**
GM QUAL!TY	**8**
DEPTH	**8**
INTERACTION	**7**
VALUE	**8**

CRASH ZX SPECTRUM MAIL ORDER SPECIALS!

AN EXCLUSIVE SPECTRUM SOFTWARE OFFER FOR CRASH READERS!

Not only can you get your hands on these amazing all-time classics at a new super low price, but you can have a badge and sticker with each game purchased! And on top of that, if you order ALL FOUR of this month's selection — we'll send you a fifth game entirely free !

Every month ELITE SYSTEMS are releasing four budget games under their new CLASSIC 2.99 range. Each game has been carefully selected because in its day it was a smash hit. Now the growing collection can be yours at a super low price complete with badges and special stickers. And each month there will be a fifth classic title ABSOLUTELY FREE to CRASH readers who buy all four of the month's offer !

3D STARSTRIKE

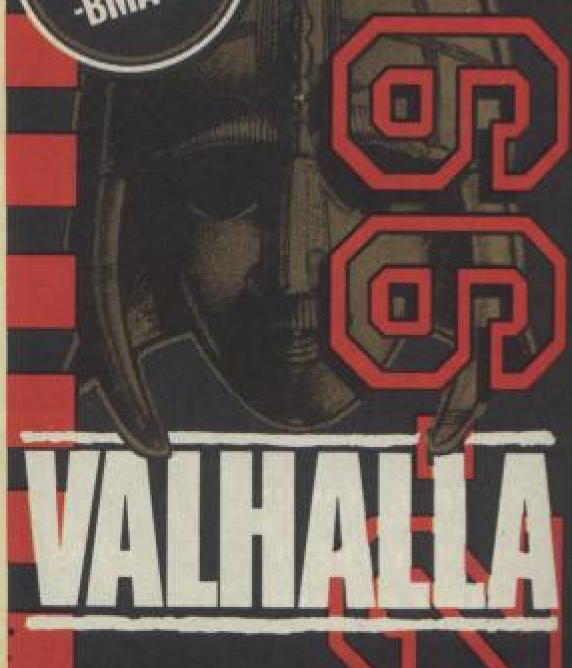
3D experts REALTIME began to make a serious mark on the market with this, their second game. At the time, this game was state-of-the-art, and few other companies have managed to catch up. Featuring detailed wire frame graphics, the fast and furious action loosely follows the plot of the Star Wars arcade machine. A CRASH SMASH in December 1984. Can you survive the ravages of space long enough to complete your mission?

VALHALLA

The first ever animated graphical adventure game on the Spectrum predated CRASH by a bit, but it remained a firm chart favourite for almost a year. Set in the Nordic wastes of Teutonic mythology, there are several different quests buried within the ever-changing landscapes. Commands are undertaken by the animated characters who interact with each other logically. A bargain in the Classic 2.99 range, since this first cost £15!



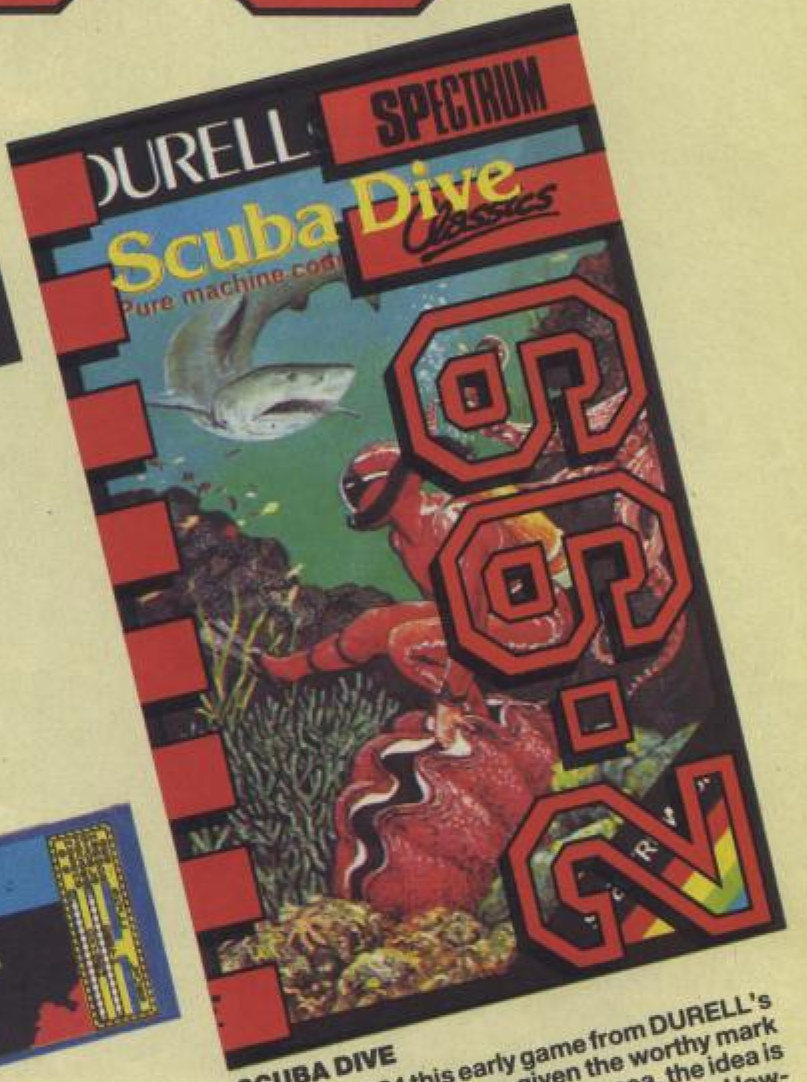




Classics 2·99









POOL

You don't need a pool table or even a pool cue to play this green screen baize game from CDS. It's probably one of the most realistic Pool games ever written for the Spectrum. The graphics are very good with smooth, fast moving balls in this copy of the arcade pool game. With a rating of 77% the reviewers were obviously suitably impressed when it was featured in CRASH back in August 1984.

SCUBA DIVE

In March 1984 this early game from DURELL's Mike Richardson, was given the worthy mark of 92%. Set under the swimmy sea, the idea is to collect as many pearls as possible. However, many dangers await you as you dive beneath the waves. Fanged fish, giant squids and Great White Sharks are all waiting to sink their teeth into your flesh. Providing you don't have a phobia about scuba diving, then this game should prove to be quite enjoyable!

THIS MONTH'S FREEBIE!!

REMEMBER — IF YOU BUY ALL FOUR OF THIS MONTH'S CLASSIC 2.99 RANGE THEN YOU CAN HAVE A FIFTH GAME ENTIRELY FREE! AND FOR THIS MONTH IT'S

HARRIER ATTACK

By Durell

Great Stuff! Please rush me my choice of Special 2.99 Classics, badges and stickers. I've ticked the appropriate boxes and the ones I want are:

☐ Scuba Dive ☐ Pool ☐ 3D Starstrike ☐ Valhalla

I've ordered ALL FOUR titles, so please send me this month's FREEBIE CLASSIC which is:

☐ HARRIER ATTACK

I enclose a cheque/postal order for: ☐ £2.99 ☐ £5.98 ☐ £8.97 ☐ £11.96

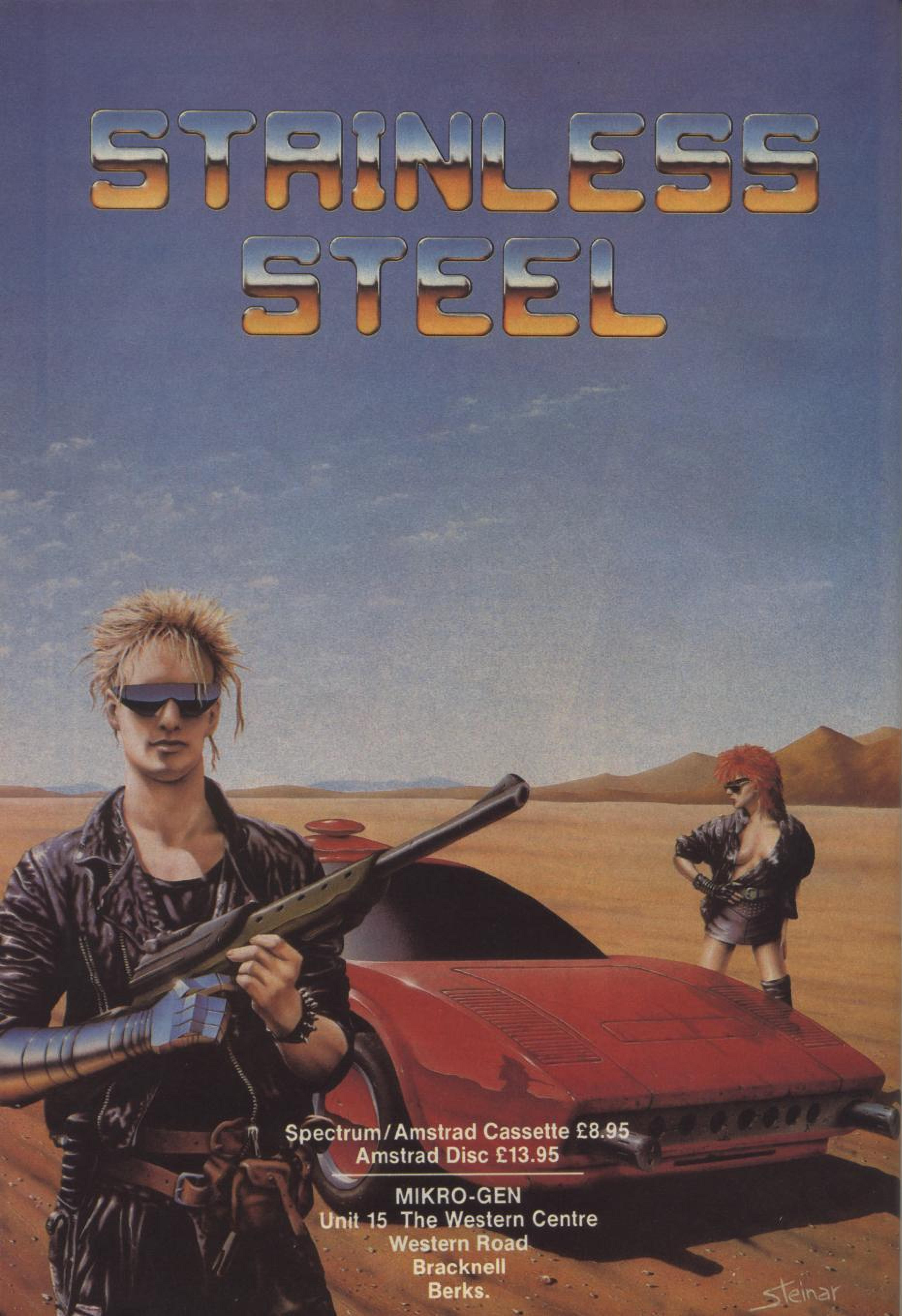
payable to CRASH MICRO.

Name .... **Postcode** ....

Address ....

....

CRASH MAIL ORDER CLASSIC OFFER, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB


STAINLESS STEEL
Spectrum/Amstrad Cassette £8.95
Amstrad Disc £13.95
MIKRO-GEN
Unit 15 The Western Centre
Western Road
Bracknell
Berks.
Steinar

A BIT OF BLARNEY ABOUT BYTES.

From Would-Be Test Pilot to Wally Programmer — resident CRASH Irishman Tony Flanagan has a few words with MIKRO-GEN's man from the Old Country, Dave Perry.

It's not every day you have lunch with a six foot-eight ex-basketball player who used to want to be a test pilot. Being on the diminutive side myself (well just a little, groan, groan), it's not easy craning one's neck for any civilised length of time. Still, the lurid tales which seemed to slip so easily off the tongue of the programmer in question, were some compensation. As for the lunch, the smoked chicken was fine, though I do wish, in retrospect, that I'd checked the lamb kebab with a geiger counter. Being a creature of the hirsute kind, now my beard glows in the dark and my hair picks up Radio Shropshire. It's not easy being a freak!

Dave Perry is one of **MIKRO-GEN**'s four programmers. The others are **Chris Hinsley**, **Rafaele Cecco** and **Mick Jones** — a new member is set to join them shortly. They're a wild bunch by all accounts — very much into busty page three girlies, vodka and Coke, and keeping roving reporter John Minson company at computer shows, as he downs an infinite number of Bloody Marys. It was Chris Hinsley, of course, who wrote the highly successful *Pyjamarama*, followed by *Everyone's a Wally* and *Battle of the Planets*.

An Irishman born and bred, nineteen year-old Dave Perry is endowed with all the native charm that one would expect of a man with pure Celtic blood flowing through his veins (me, partisan?) In his gentle Irish brogue, he related how he began programming while still at school. In the sixth form, he managed to write a a number of programs for Tim Hartnell of **INTERFACE PUBLICATIONS** and his work was published in several books. This led to a book consisting of Dave's programs only — *Astounding Arcade Games* — which sold 13,000 copies.

His connection with **MIKRO-GEN** began when he sent them *Drakmaze*, which they accepted. The deal fell through, however, and there was a temporary hiatus in his links with the company. Of course, the story doesn't end there. On one of his frequent trips to London he met **Mike Meek**, **MIKRO-GEN**'s MD, at one of the computer shows. Mike was attempting to set up a programming team and Dave, because of his previous experience and the links he had already forged with the company, seemed an obvious choice.

It was an opportunity he could not turn down, though it would mean having to 'chuck in' school, as he put it. 'Everyone was telling me not to do it,' said Dave, but it was something he felt he had to try. So, he packed his joystick and sundry other computery items and moved to Virginia Water, near Bracknell.

Dave's first task was to write a test program which was never actually completed: 'it was coming along very well but Chris needed help with *Pyjamarama* so I dived in with that. We'd just been given a prototype Amstrad, so I wrote the Amstrad version.' The press launch for *Pyjamarama* (which cost **MIKRO-GEN** a mere thirteen smackers a minute) didn't go according to plan. As Dave explained: 'it turned out that on the way Chris was sick on the tube and had to go home. He missed the whole thing. The Press was there in force, waiting for the guy who had written the game, so I took his place and they interviewed me instead.'



Mr Perry performs a fine balancing act for Cameron Pound's camera lens outside Ludlow Castle. Looks like Wally Week reckons he's the only superstar who should be in the picture

The success of *Pyjamarama* was followed by more Wally successes: *Everyone's a Wally*, written by Chris, and Dave's *Herbert's Dummy Run*. Suddenly, in Dave's words, 'Everyone was jumping up and down demanding more Wally games.' In response, Dave came up with *Three Weeks in Paradise* which received outstanding reviews and was his first solo CRASH Smash!

Programmers, Dave told me, tend to be a little pampered. This is because they are the creative nucleus around which everything else revolves. This doesn't mean to say that they have an easy time — they work long hours and their commitment has to be total. 'When I first came over here,' Dave explained, 'I worked very hard indeed. I was in work at half-eight and worked through to twelve-thirty at night. I did this for months, seven days a week.' (Phew! Nearly as much as the CRASH team!). Now the hours — nine to seven — are more civilised.

Dave's latest game marks a total departure from what he had done previously. *Stainless Steel*, an arcade game, took him five months to write. The player is given a bird's-eye-view of the action — simple enough it would seem — but from a programming perspective this did cause Dave some headaches: 'the problem with this game was drawing things from above. I'll never do another game from above. I've always done things from the side and always will in the future.'

In collaboration with Chris, Dave is now working on a new game. Does working in partnership create any problems, I wondered? 'This is the first time we've ever worked together,' said Dave, 'but one can forsee some difficulties. Two people can't do the same thing as there's only one keyboard and one programmer at a time, so if someone comes in and changes something when you're not there it can get confusing.'

So what's this new game all about? Vaguely, it concerns 'bendy cylindrical rubber-like doobries' that look not unlike liquorice Allsorts: 'we still haven't thought of a name,' said Dave. The idea is to stop yourself being horribly gormandized by frostie monsters. By this time the lamb kebab was beginning to take its toll on my delicate digestive system. The thought of animate liquorice Allsorts certainly wasn't helping things.

Conversation turned to the subject of when Dave expected to make his first million, and thirty was tossed around as good an age as any. But how did the doubters back home react to him now? 'Everyone's really proud of me,' said Dave. 'At school, the headmaster just loves me. Somehow, he managed to get the Government to invest half a million in the computer department.' Dave is clearly something of a local celebrity down Belfast way. The local papers have done features on him, and he's even been interviewed by the BBC World Service.

With time quickly running out, there were just a few moments to catch Dave's daguerreotype (the wonders of **NEWSFIELD** Technology!) before he began his six hour trek back to civilisation. As he disappeared into the Ludlow sunset, I whispered *bon voyage*! . . . and *bon appetit*! (funny lingo for an old bogtrotter). Then I went to check my beard in the mirror . . . and where was that music coming from?

Collect a solid GOLD Trivial Pursuit Set!

Following on from their success with *Split Personalities*, the dynamic duo behind DOMARK are set to take the world by storm with the official version of *Trivial Pursuits*, that cunning boardgame.

Not being stingy sorts, Mark and Dominic have arranged for a special *Trivial Pursuit* boardgame set to be made — very special, in fact: it's solid gold! According to the people who are making this unique set, it should be insured for around £10,000, but it's rather difficult to put a value on it as no other gold TP sets are going to be made. Ever.

We've had a peek at the Commodore version of the game — which looks quite nifty. The game follows the board-based original exactly in terms of gameplay, but a few neat touches have been added which should distance it from run-of-the mill computer quiz games. Rather than get players to type in answers to questions at the keyboard (BORING!), the designers have gone for a rather different approach. Each player has a time limit in which to answer the question flashed on screen, and then everyone gets to see the right answer. If everyone agrees that the player has just answered the question correctly, then he or she presses Y for yes and the move is made automatically. A prod of the N key means it's the next player's turn.

The whole caboodle is hosted by a cute little questionmaster character by the name of TP, who leaps around the screen adding to the entertainment, and there are no dice. Fruit machine addicts will no doubt throw 'sixes' all the time — a pulsating light whizzes from digit to digit rather like a nudge feature on an electronic one armed bandit. Lesser mortals will have to rely on quick reaction times when it comes to stopping the flashing numbers on higher values.

The CRASH Questionmaster, Dominic Handy, has devised ten tricky (but Trivial) questions to do with the Spectrum games world and CRASH Magazine itself for you to ponder over. Get into game playing mode, and have a crack at answering them. When you reckon you've got all ten quessies answered correctly, think up a question that could be included in a Trivial Pursuit set. remember, there's quite often a witty little clue in the question itself, and don't ask anything of any real consequence or importance. It's meant to be TRIVIAL pursuits, after all!

Make sure you whizz your entry into CRASH TRIVIAL PURSUITS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB so that they arrive by September 25th, and you could be in with a chance for the Big One, a solid gold Boardgame to impress your friends with no end.

We've got fifteen prizes to give away in all. The question you make up (and don't forget to add the answer!) is going to be used as a tiebreaker if lots of people get all ten answers right.

Top five entrants pick up a *New Genus II* boardgame (not in gold, sorry) and ten more folks collect a pack of official *Trivial Pursuit* after dinner mints. The overall winner goes forward to a national intermagazine final, to be held in London — all expenses paid of course — and will represent CRASH in the play off for the solid gold set.

Get on the trail of real GOLD Priceless Prize on offer from DOMARK

Crash Competition

(1) How much did The Black Watch Kit cost?
(2) Who guards the bonus level in Tapper?
(3) In which game did Cuchulainn the Great first appear?
(4) Which journey did the Southern Belle make?
(5) What class of ship do you fly in Elite?
(6) What was the exact password for Spectacle?
(7) What number was Astroclone **in the Seddiab series?**
(8) How many events are there in Geoff Capes Strong Man?
(9) How many events in 128K Daley's Supertest?
(10) What does CRL stand for?

ROLE PLAYING ON COMPUTER

Last month Pete Tamlyn, freelance game designer and regular contributor to WHITE DWARF, explained what role-playing is in terms of more familiar gaming styles such as adventure gamebooks and computer adventures. Now he looks at how role-playing games have been converted to run on computers, with particular reference to the Spectrum, of course. . . .

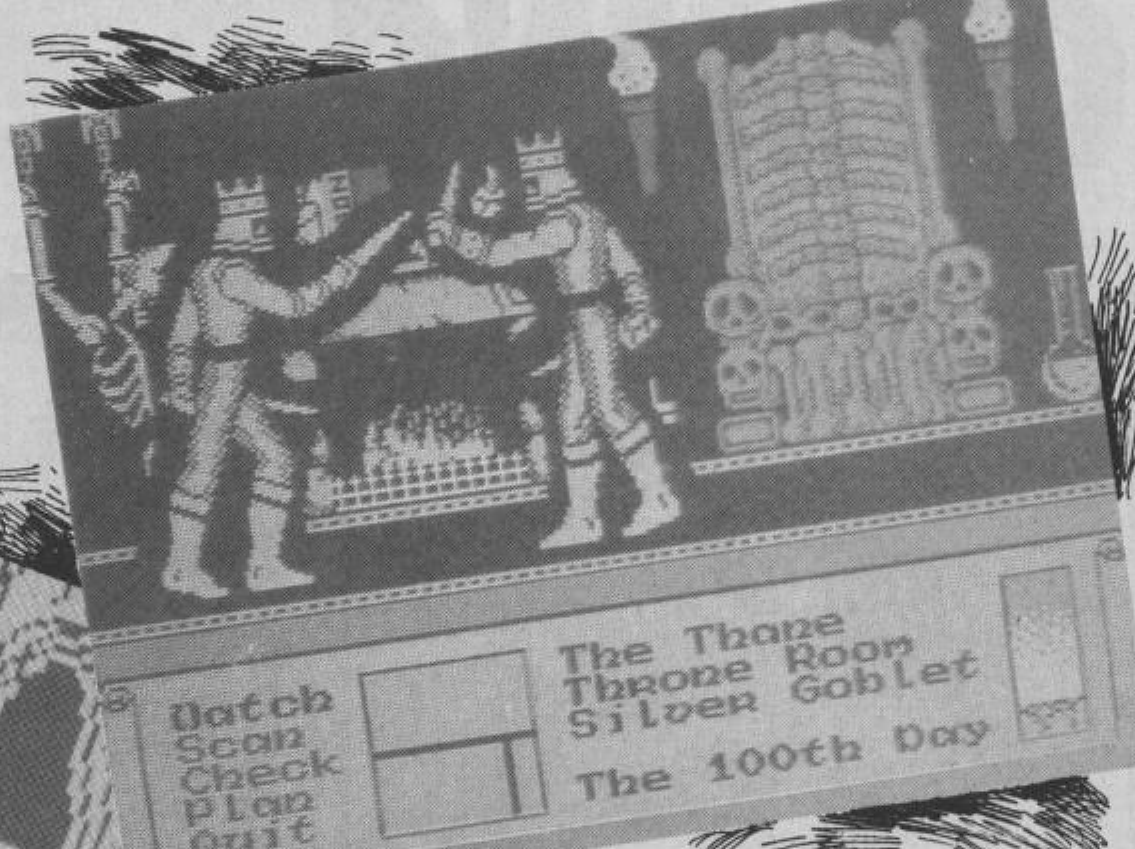
Despite the seemingly logical progression from gamebooks through computer adventures to role-playing that I outlined last issue, role-playing actually came first. The other two forms are the result of attempts to adapt role-playing to different media. The original *Adventure* and other pioneering computer games were written for mainframes and circulated largely through professional programming circles. But way back in 1981 those of us old enough (and, pre-Spectrum, rich enough) to be using micros for games were dazzled by the appearance of the original on which *Swords & Sorcery* is based.

The game is called *Wizardry*. NOT the same game as the similarly named product you can now get for the Commodore. In fact it is only available on 'business' micros, but it is still selling well, having successfully made the transition from Apple II to IBM PC to Macintosh. In a world where most computer games only last a few months, a five-year lifespan must in itself be something of a record.

In appearance *Wizardry* is very similar to *S&S*. It has the same perspective view down the tunnels, the same static view of creatures you meet, in fact almost an identical screen layout. It doesn't have the top-down view of the map, but being disc-based it can afford to have completely separate screens for things like messing around with what you are carrying and wearing. In addition it allows you a party of up to six characters, and you can take them out of the dungeon to buy new equipment, get healed and gain experience. You can even rescue the bodies of dead characters and pay the local temple to have them resurrected.

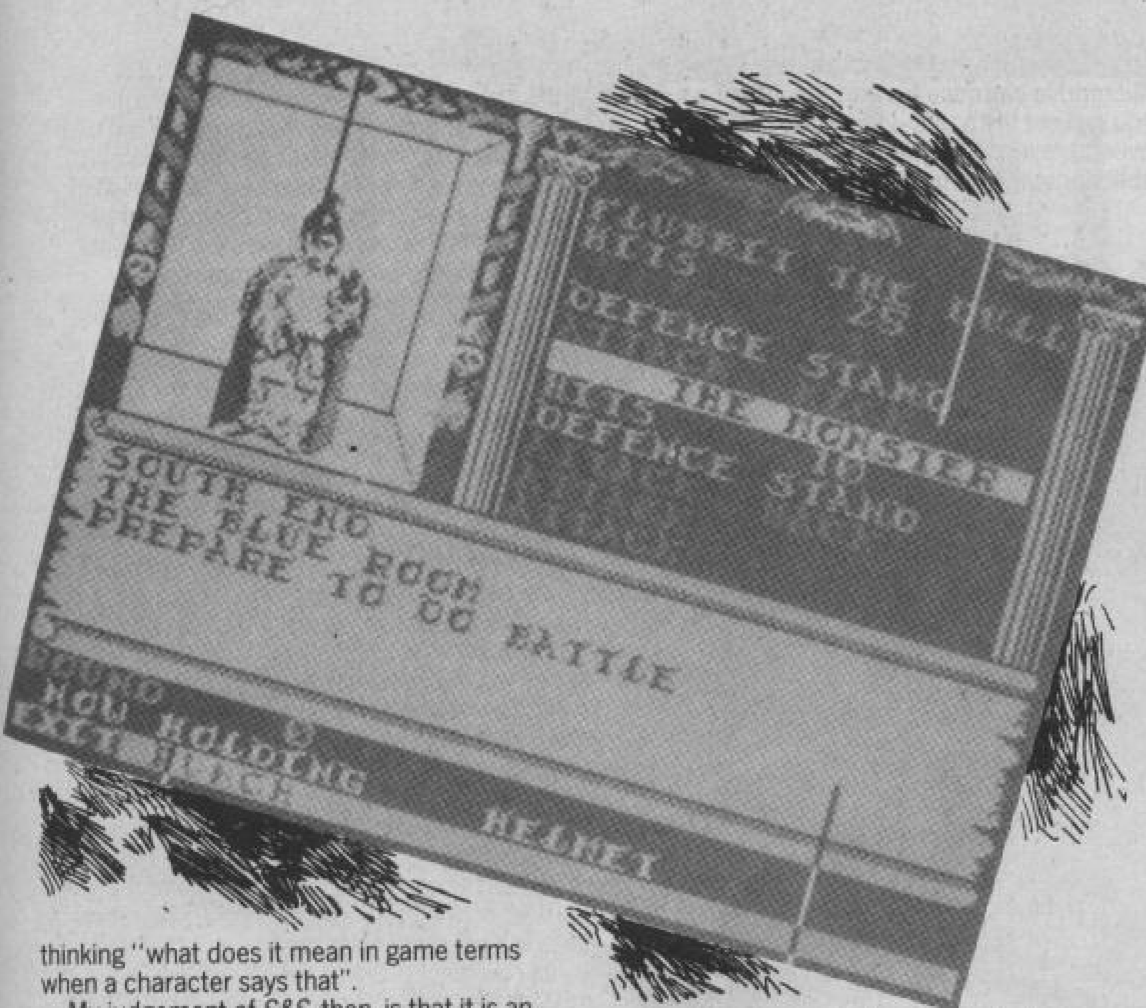
Since *Wizardry* first appeared a number of other games building on the idea have been produced, but they have all been American, disc-based and have made very little impact over here.

I've been waiting a long time for something like *Wizardry* to appear on the Spectrum, and I suspect that the fact that *Wizardry* is so good is in part responsible for my extreme disappointment in *Swords & Sorcery*. In fact it is a reasonable copy, improving on the original in some places, but there are are a number of very irritating things about it: the sound effects, the garish screen (which is almost unreadable on my small TV), the awful strip menu system, and the ridiculous number of orders you have to issue in order to take the treasure from a chest all combine to put me off the game. If a human GamesMaster didn't allow you to eat your sandwiches until you'd specifically told him that you were taking them out of your pack first, you would probably hit him! *S&S* insists on such ridiculous detail. More importantly, *S&S* doesn't allow you to come out of the dungeon and seems to have a very high kill rate. I found it very difficult to role-play, whereas in *Wizardry* I become so fond of good characters that I waste a fortune trying to get them resurrected when I do make a mistake.





One very brave thing that PSS did with *S&S* is to try to implement a means of communicating with the non-player creatures. Unfortunately this doesn't work very well. To start with, much of the conversation that the computer generates is infantile: the authors seem to have thought that the game would only ever be played by five-year-olds. Also, because the system isn't clever enough to indulge in meaningful conversation, you find yourself



thinking "what does it mean in game terms when a character says that".

My judgement of *S&S*, then, is that it is an attempt to put role-playing on a computer, but that it fails because there are so many facets of the game which irritate, are destructive of atmosphere, and forcibly remind you that you are only playing a game. I much prefer *Heavy on the Magick*. That looks better, has a much better user-interface, and is entertaining thanks to the traditional **GARGOYLE** humour. Of course it is still very much a traditional **GARGOYLE** logic puzzle once you get into it, and it still doesn't allow you to come out of the dungeon to rest and recuperate. It's much more fun to play!

I spoke to **Greg Follis** of **GARGOYLE** and the world of Graumerphy to see what he thought of role-playing on computers. It seems that *HotM* was indeed designed to implement as many features of *Dungeons & Dragons* (the first role-playing game) as possible, but this was carefully balanced against the requirement for good graphics and a playable game. As they had to leave something out, they tried as much as possible to get the atmosphere of *D&D* rather than reproduce the mechanics of the game. That certainly seems to be the right approach.

Another interesting fact is that, before *HotM* was written, **GARGOYLE** went through the exercise of creating a complete world in which to set the game. Although in *HotM* itself Axil never gets out of the dungeon there is, in fact, a whole world there waiting for him. **GARGOYLE** hope to publish a book about Graumerphy sometime in the future.

That presents a number of intriguing possibilities. To start with, information from the book could be used as clues in later releases using the *HotM* system. This would give a lot more identification with the game world. One of the major problems with adventures is that you often can't convey enough information in the game to be able to base the entire game on internal material: you have to bring in puzzles that are not an integral part of the plot. With a whole book to draw on things get much easier. (**MELBOURNE HOUSE** did something of the sort with *Lord of the Rings* as did games such as the *Midnight* series and *Runestone* which provided lots of background material in the instruction booklet). Also, with all that background, **GARGOYLE** could produce a role-playing game set in Graumerphy and allow you to carry characters across from the multi-player role-playing scenarios to the solo scenarios on the computer. Whether they will actually do such a thing is another matter, but the possibility is there.

A more recent contender in the field is the French game, *Mandragore*. This is a far more ambitious program, being much larger than *S&S* or *HotM* (on the Spectrum it comes as two tapes). Like *S&S* it tries hard to implement the mechanics of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Up to four characters are allowed, and they are able to adventure through a 'wilderness' (that's an old *D&D* term for 'outdoors') as well as explore a number of dungeons (sorry, 'chateaux'). Having several named characters does improve the atmosphere somewhat although, unlike *Wizardry*, each party is separate; you can't have a pool of characters and pick the four you want. The game also includes villages at which you can buy (or steal) equipment. Nevertheless I was still disappointed by relatively trivial irritations.

The main problem is that the game's designer, having got this nice fantasy world set up, can't think of anything to do with it other than set silly brain teasers. At least in a **LEVEL 9** game the problems, if not an obvious part of the plot, don't seem too out of place. In *Mandragore* each Chateau has its own abstract puzzle. I'm sure the problems are very ingenious, but why should people playing the parts of a barbarian warrior and beautiful priestess want to spend their time solving mathematical conundrums?

What we have seen so far, then, is that computer games can make a reasonable stab at reproducing the atmosphere of role-playing, but as yet have fallen rather short. The main problems are lack of memory, the inability of the computer to hold a conversation with the player, and designers who try to write 'role-playing' games without seeming to have much understanding of what role-playing is all about.

With the advent of more powerful machines and disc drives (256K Spectrum?) we can hope for considerable improvements: bigger games, more text and pictures, and multi-player facilities. In the meantime, game designers should bear in mind that, if they want to produce role-playing games, they should go for atmosphere — good stories and/or good graphics — rather than worry about complicated mechanics.

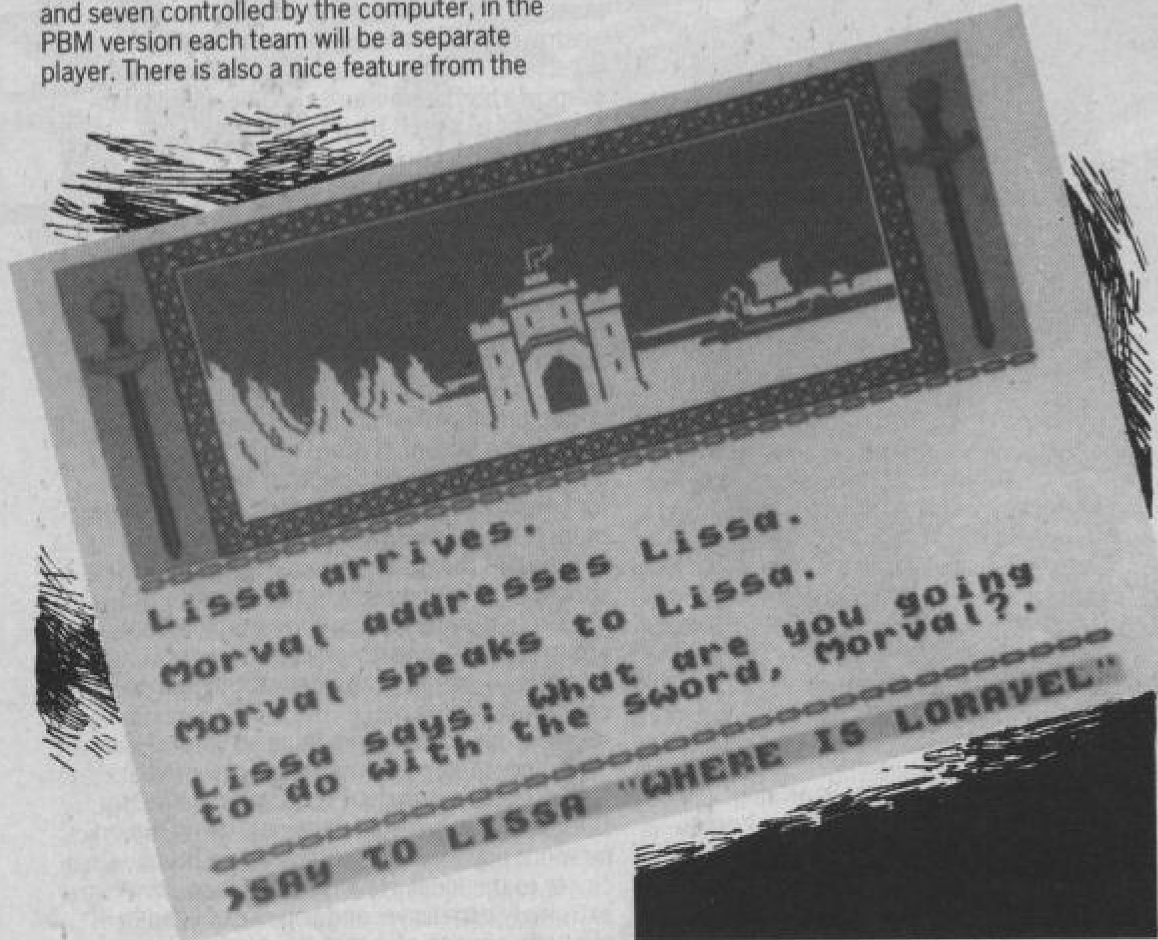
I haven't said anything so far about computer-moderated play-by-mail games or **BRITISH TELECOM**'s *Multi-User Dungeon*. Obviously such games, being run on far more powerful computers, come much closer to the ideal. However, they can prove extremely expensive, and you are obliged to play with anyone else that the game company happens to admit to the game. Personally such things don't appeal, but you'll be able to make up your own minds by following **Brendon Kavanagh's** new column.

What I will mention, however, is **Mike Singleton's** new game, *Dark Sceptre*. When I spoke to Mike he was quite adamant that role-playing didn't interest him and that what he tried to write was strategy games in a fantasy setting. Nevertheless (and bearing in mind that the game wasn't finished when I wrote this so I



haven't actually seen it working) *Dark Sceptre* does seem to have a lot of promise.

Firstly Mike has tackled the interaction problem by offering a play-by-mail (and Microdrive) version of the game. Whereas the solo game has one team of characters controlled by you and seven controlled by the computer, in the PBM version each team will be a separate player. There is also a nice feature from the story-telling point of view: when you get your Microdrive cartridge back at the end of a turn you can set the game up and see that turn's events played out on the screen. You'll even be able to get the computer to make a guess at how the story continues, based on what it knows of your intentions and those of other players intentions. Finally, Mike assures me that each character in the game has personality traits (aggressiveness, greed, and so on) which can affect the game play and can be changed by events in the game. Considering that Mike didn't set out to produce a computerised rolegame, it is ironic that he may well have come closest yet to succeeding.



Finally, what about this question as to whether role-playing games are Adventures or Strategy Games, and therefore whether they belong in Derek's column or Sean's? Personally I think the argument is silly. Games which require brain instead of a steady joystick hand get poor enough treatment from magazines as it is without making matters worse by fighting amongst themselves, but there is a division, and it is one that exists within role-playing itself.

The people who invented role-playing, **Gary Gygax** and **Dave Arneson**, are keen wargamers. So are many of the people who now run role-playing companies: **Bryan Ansell** of **GAMES WORKSHOP**, for example. And, of course, there are many wargamers who also role-play. Some of these people prefer to ignore the actual role-playing element entirely and treat the whole thing as a wargame with an incredibly complex set of rules. At the opposite extreme some role-players advocate doing away with rules altogether, relying instead on the Games-Master's judgement. Most people fall somewhere in the middle, and depending on which side of the mid point they fall they will tend to see role-playing as closer to either Adventures or Strategy Games.

There is no simple categorisation . . .

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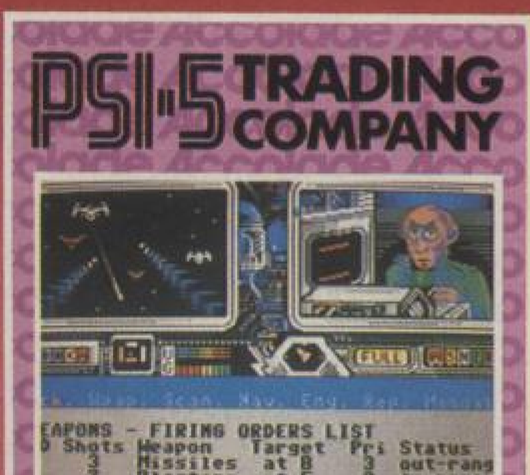
Straight from the arcades of America KUNG FU MASTER will test your skills to the limit. Martial art experts and demons of every description are your obstacles in this fast paced video action thriller. To travel through the Wizard's Temple to rescue the fair maiden you must avoid demons, dragons, snakes and killer bees. Beware of weapon wielding henchmen and defeat each of the deadly guardians to advance to each of the five floors. Your only defence is your martial art skills!

Rommel, the cunning Desert Fox, is on the rampage; sweeping across the desert sands, laying low the allied forces and swarming through allied territory. In DESERT FOX it is your mission to rescue North Africa from the grip of this awesome foe. You will need to be as wise and as cautious as the most battle hardened general in planning your strategy. If you fail, your final head to head conflict with the Desert Fox himself may be your last!

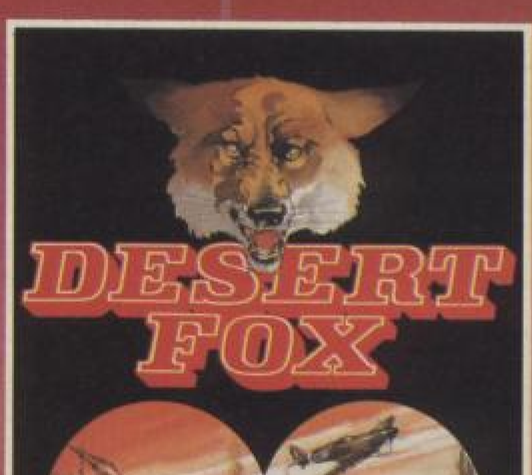


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P-P-PUMPKIN PUZZLERS FROM PALACE ...

Crash Competition

WIN AN ORIGINAL OIL PAINTING OF CAULDRON II!

— *30 copies of ANTIRIAD up for grabs*



Hubble bubble, toil and trouble . . . yes it's yet another spellbinding CRASH competition this time courtesy of PALACE. But before your humble minion speaks of that, let me tell you what I've had for lunch. Well, believe it or not, I spotted some rather nice pumpkins in the local veggie shop, and thought I'd get one. Mummy Minion cooked me a lovely pumpkin pie yesterday, and I've just had pumpkin sarnies for lunch. Yum!

All this pumpkin eating has had a rather strange effect on your humble Minion it seems. I'm imbued with magical powers! The bearded one's Gaelic gibberish is now almost comprehensible. And I can breathe in the pongy fumes of the Doc's Albanian ciggies without hurling myself through the window . . . but I digress.

To get back to the point, those wizards from PALACE are offering an original oil painting which will send you into heights of ecstasy and should serve to brighten up anyone's bedroom wall. Guaranteed to frighten your friends, bewitch your betters and mesmerise your mates, this painting is not for wimps. Based on the *Cauldron II* theme, it features all your favourite nasties including the wicked Witch, the gargoyle and skeleton.

But of course, the hero of it all is that little veggie minion, Pumpkin. If you remember, he has to bounce his way through the castle chambers collecting various items which he can use to destroy the old hag. . . . Which brings me to the subject of the competition. The wizards at PALACE have conjured up five questions that only true pumpkin-lovers will be able to answer. Pump your next of kin for the answers if you're a bit stuck . . .

The best entry pulled out of the CRASH competition pumpkin will receive this unique oil painting as fast as we can hire a broomstick to get it to the sender. Don't forget to think up a good name for your pet pumpkin as this could be the most crucial factor. And just in case you don't win the first prize, PALACE are offering thirty copies of their new game, The Sacred Armour of Antiriad as to runners up. Send your entries on a postcard to PUMPKIN POSERS, CRASH TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB by September 28.

PUMPKIN POSERS

1. The largest pumpkin ever produced in England was grown by:

a: Frank Bruno
b: Robert Butcher
c: Atila the Hun

2. The word for 'pumpkin' in Germany is:

a: achtung
b: sauerkraut
c: kurbis

3. Faces are cut into a hollowed out pumpkin at:

a: Christmas
b: Halloween
c: Ramadan

4. Your mom gives you baked pumpkin. Which sauce would you choose to go with it?

a: chocolate sauce
b: mint sauce
c: tomato sauce

5. What name would you give your pet pumpkin?

FRONTLINE



with Sean Masterson



HALF A PAGE OF SCRIBBLED LINES

Yet another unduly shrunken episode in the unending saga of Frontline starts here folks. With the limitations on page space, I'm afraid that there is no room for the Forum. However, after a tremendous response to Peter Shields' letter last month (the one that suggested Rosetta and I go and join the four million), the benign and ever jolly Graeme has promised to allocate some extra letters space next issue. Keep your fingers crossed.

This is of course that time of year when effort is directed towards putting last minute touches to software in time for The Show, panic sets in and software houses set up shop in Olympia at the PCW Show. I'm looking forward to this year's event. More and more, software developers are considering the way the American software market is progressing and introducing more strategic overtones to their games. No doubt the time will come when it will be very difficult to 'pigeon-hole' a game. Until that day, it should be interesting to watch the face of software gradually change. Go along and enjoy yourselves.

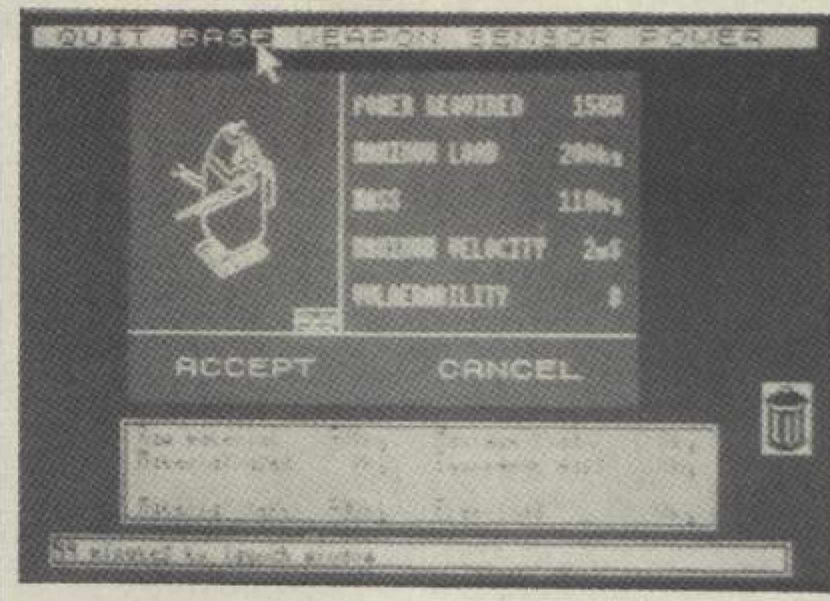
MISSION OMEGA

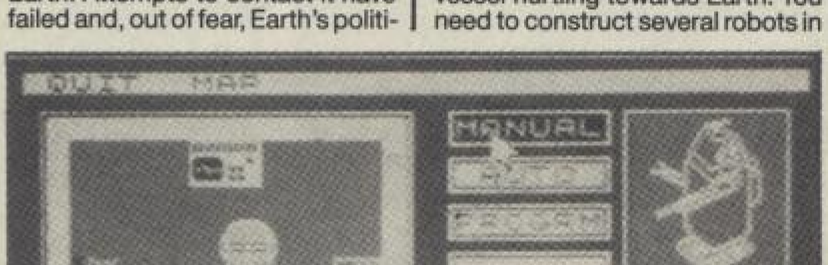
Producer: Mind Games
Retail Price: **£9.95**

Latest in the **Argus Press Software Mind Games** range is *Mission Omega*, an arcade strategy game with some interesting aspects. The plot goes like this. You are Captain Allen of the Windwraith, a mining vessel of the United States of Europe. Your ship has just survived a perilous mining mission, but fate is set to deal another blow. An unknown object with the mass of a small moon has entered the solar system with a velocity just less than the speed of light itself and a trajectory taking it ever closer to Earth. Attempts to contact it have failed and, out of fear, Earth's politicians have decided it must be deactivated. Windwraith is the only ship capable of reaching it in time.

In fact you have one hour real time. After forty five minutes, the object (codenamed Omega) launches a missile towards Earth. Fifteen minutes later, it reaches its destination. Inside that hour, Omega's four reactors must be shut down and you must escape, thereby making the artefact safe.

The fully icon driven game centres on the exploration of the vessel hurtling towards Earth. You need to construct several robots in order to start exploring, and up to eight may be built, each with a base, weapon, sensor and power pack. The number and type of robots are limited by the amount of resources carried by the mining craft. Several types of each of the four robotic components are available, making the actual choice of machines quite varied.





Robot bases may be anti-gravity, tracked, legged or sphere (rather like a Terrahawks Zeroid). Weapons include small and large lasers, particle beam weapons and missiles. Sensors offer the choice of visual, audio or infra-red while power packs consist of two types of battery or a small nuclear reactor. The combinations may be limited by the fact that certain items need more power than others and each chassis can only support so many kilograms' mass. The computer will not allow robots that do not conform to the restrictions of their components to be assembled. However, seeing as they have to be built in real time, there is little room for error.

Once your robots have been built and named, exploration may begin. This may take place in one of three ways. The first, and most obvious of these is by manual control of each robot one at a time. However, robots may be allowed to progress on automatic (though this is only possible for a short period of time) or may be programmed for a limited number of moves (and this was one option that did not seem to work). When a droid is under your control, its progress is displayed on an animated display to the left of the screen. To the right is a real time clock, status display for the droid, damage and energy

displays, control options (manual, auto and programmed) and an icon to select the next droid for control. At the top of the screen the Quit and Map options are provided — the map only showing the part of Omega explored so far. At the base of the screen is a message window, used for communications with droids.

Robot power packs gradually run down and eventually leave droids immobile, but a drained pack recharges if the droid is left alone for a while. More importantly, Omega is equipped with its own defence droids which are inevitably encountered from time to time. When they are, it's useful to have a droid with a powerful weapon and an accurate sensor unit!

In fact a series of keys are required to allow access to each of the reactors. Keys are relatively easy to find. Reactors have to be found, identified and deactivated. Even then there are a lot of unanswered questions. How does the teleport work? (I can use them but not necessarily control them.) What is the purpose of the switches set sporadically across the complex and do they have anything to do with the apparently invulnerable force fields? Is there anywhere where new sources of raw materials to build replacement droids can be found?

What Argus have managed to create here is an interesting, difficult but colourful and enjoyable hybrid game that should appeal equally to strategy and arcade fans. It isn't the best of its kind by any means but the chances are, you won't give up until it's successfully completed. The worst part of the game is the instruction inlay. It's a total waste of time. Apart from contradicting itself (at one point saying Omega has to be destroyed, then just deactivated), it doesn't even mention which keys are needed to do what. There is also no warning about the fact that the game is not Interface 1 compatible. Apart from the dreadful instructions, and the rather steep price, the game really is worth taking a closer look at.

Now, I wonder how I'm going to disable those force fields . . .

PRESENTATION 81%

Good screen layout and choice of colour

RULES 36%

Once you figure them out, they're fine. Shoddily left out of the package for some reason

PLAYABILITY 75%

Not easy, I admit. Looking after all those droids can be quite a headache

GRAPHICS 79%

Some good animation and a pleasing display

AUTHENTICITY N/A
OPPONENT 86%

Most formidable

VALUE FOR MONEY 72%

At least a pound over the odds

OVERALL 75%

A good challenge if you can spare the cash

PLANETOPOLY

Producer: Celerysoft
Retail Price: **£2.00**
Author: **J Sharp**



This is a pure text game for two to four players from a company that goes by the extraordinary name of Celerysoft. The game is neatly but sparsely packaged with a monochrome inlay, instructions and a recipe for braised pigeon with celery . . . er yes, thankyou very much. Just what I needed. Really!

Ah, but the game — what of that? Well, as there was no solitaire option, I had to pit my wits against — you guessed it . . . me. And sure enough, twas a mighty challenge (brain the size of a planet and all that). After selecting the number of players, each player names his or her homeworld. Order of play then progresses sequentially, each player taking all the actions for a turn before the next.

There are various choices open to a player presented on a menu. Certain choices may lead to a second menu for elaboration. Initial choices allow a player to review status, access mining, trading, government or military options, check how much money has been spent (and where), and end the turn.

The status screen displays the planet's name, cash reserve, population, a popularity factor and a strength factor. The mining screen gives you the initial option of carrying out a scientific analysis of the planet's surface. This costs 20,000 credits (your bank balance always starts at the 50,000 credit mark) which is quite a chunk, but rewards are to be gained in later months once ores have been discovered and become serious mining propositions. Once mines are open (normally two minerals can be discovered on each planet), money may be spent on actually extracting them for sale on the trading screen.

Trading is the next section on the menu and like mining, selecting this option leads to a sub-menu. The most advisable thing to do first is to check on the sale prices for various minerals. It may be that mining certain ores will not be profitable, depending on the state of the market. After viewing prices, you may wish to sell some of the ores you have processed. If this is the case, yet another sub-menu opens up allowing you to sell any proportion of any ores to the Intergalactic Federation. Ores can never be sold to other players.

The government option is most peculiar. Typically, selection of this option prompts the arrival of another sub-menu but the options therein are not what you might expect. This is primarily a spending screen. Money can be invested in housing, transport or buying imports (the nature of these remains unspecified). The only other option on this screen is modification of the tax rate. This leads to yet another menuette displaying the current level of tax and population. Tax may be raised or lowered: obviously the taxation rate affects the amount you have to spend each year. However, to offset the advantages of a high tax rate, the rate is inversely proportional to the popularity level. A balance must be struck.

The military option gives you the choice of either spending money on defence or going to war with a neighbour. There is no choice for those who want to form alliances. Belligerent races may only engage each other on an individual level. This limits players' choices. Only non-hinderance pacts are feasible.

Another option provides a summary of progress made by the player this turn, and details expenditure. At the bottom of the main menu screen lies another menu catering for loading and saving games, quitting the entire game or moving play on to the next month.

The character set is redefined and is the only presentation feature in the game. My real moan with *Planetopoly* is not that it lacks a one player version (although considering the simplicity of the game, one should have been included),



but the lack of options available. Apparently, an improved version of the game has been prepared for PBM gaming. I can see no logical reason for not adding some of these details to this game. It hardly packs out the memory.

As I've already stated, interest could have been increased by active alliegances. There is more to government spending than transport and housing. There could have been more atmospheric background in terms of this anonymous federation. Whatever, there isn't enough in this game to keep me interested for more than a few games. Reasonable is about the best compliment I can give to this cassetteful of missed opportunities.

PRESENTATION 39%

Very basic — thanks for the recipe though

RULES 56%

Competent and adequately explained system

PLAYABILITY 78%

Very easy to get into. Could have been better idiot proofed (unwanted text input can crash the game)

GRAPHICS N/A
AUTHENTICITY 43%

Too simplistic to be anything more than a game of 'guess the algorithm'

OPPONENT N/A
VALUE FOR MONEY 50%

Debatable. At least it's cheap

OVERALL 48%

The game is only flawed in as much as it could have offered so much more

A NEW WAY OF WRITING ADVENT

Over a year's development work has gone into INCENTIVE's adventure-writing utility, The Graphic Adventure Creator, **and it has already appeared for the Amstrad, earning a very favourable response. The Spectrum adventure-writing utility market is still dominated by** The Quill — **can** GAC **step in as the new king? Sean Masterson takes a close look, and rustles up a couple of comments from the CRASH crew. . . .**

The Graphic Adventure Creator is a sophisticated adventure writing package that arrives on a single cassette. Adventures written with the package include multiple commands in a single input, advanced graphics, full word recognition and a host of other features intended to make this the state-of-the-art adventure writing utility.

The packaging is very neat. GAC comes in a large format cassette holder complete with a glossy manual. The printing isn't remarkable but the manual explains every detail of the utility with care and precision — sometimes with accompanying graphics where it is thought they may help. Loading is achieved easily thanks to use of fast loading techniques and the user is presented with a title/credit screen followed by a menu page. GAC itself leaves approximately 23K free for your adventure once it resides in memory, but larger adventures could be created with multiple loading techniques — this should mean that the adventure can be as big as the author desires. Complete adventures run independently of the utility.

To give you an idea of just what this package is capable of, INCENTIVE include a couple of mini adventures with the package. One is a pure text offering, the other uses graphics. If the full solution to an example adventure is known, the entire game may be played in one input. The result is like a short story, punctuated with a series of commands and it forms an impressive demonstration of GAC's power. There is also a Quickstart file which loads a group of common verbs, conditions and other details to allow rapid creation of small games or time to be saved when commencing larger works.

As the graphics capability is the most obviously powerful aspect of the utility, let's begin with a look at the graphics creation routines . . . As with any utility of this type, the more complex the graphics, the less memory is available for the rest of the adventure. While this might suggest the need for simplistic graphics, INCENTIVE have made sure that the adventure writer has the opportunity to make up complex images should they be required. Block or line graphics may be implemented with ease, and a host of devices have been included to make the process as painless as possible.

Four pure colours may be used in an illustration, though these may be stippled in any combination to give the effect of up to ten colours and textures on screen. Bright and flash options are also provided.

The top two thirds of the graphic creation screen is surrounded by the frame in which the image is created. Below this, the pen and paper symbol are permanently displayed along with the border colour. The pen rests on the paper during the drawing process for clarity during picture creation. Unfortunately the options menu is not displayed (as it is on the Amstrad version of GAC) which means serious study of the manual is required until the commands become second nature. This is my only gripe.

The drawing routines supplied cater for all needs.

My first experience with *GAC* was a pleasure. Just a quick look at the manual allows you to immediately design a simple adventure, and after the little features of *GAC* are sorted out you could spends months designing the adventure of your dreams. The package is extremely flexible, and if you don't feel like doing some of the work, like defining all your words, then *GAC* will help out.

The thing that makes *GAC* so attractive is that you don't need to have any idea of programming at all. The only thing you need is an idea of what how your adventure is to work. It is then just a simple case of telling the program how the locations are linked and then supplying messages and conditions — you can even have pictures to help the story along. I was amazed to see that INCENTIVE have managed to include an art package in with the price. This contains some very complex features: like elastic elipses, scanning through the drawing of the picture, and proper deleting of more than the last thing you drew.

The adventures that can be produced should rank among the cleverest on the market. If you'd always thought that you would play adventures if you could find the right one — then you have no excuse any more — write your own!. *GAC* is the most powerful adventure creator on the Spectrum ever, an adventure processor rather than a cumbersome adventure assembler.

Elipses, Dots, Boxes, Fill and Shade, slow and fast drawing, picture merging, and picture or stage deletion are all included along with a picture scan that allows analysis and alteration of any stage in the creation. An attribute grid showing possible problems due to the Spectrum's colour limitations is also available as a screen overlay.

The merging facility is very important from a memory saving angle. If a picture is drawn and then has a frame decoration added (previously drawn as a separate picture), only three bytes are used. This cuts down tremendously on memory used if repetitive pictures are used.

Most of the features work smoothly but the exception to this neatness is the Fill command. This isn't perfect and an optimum position within the area to be filled needs to be found. Even then, in an awkward shape, a gap may be left. This can be rectified by implementing Fill a second time from a better position and the final result will be no different from that achieved with a more capable command routine. However, the finished picture takes up more memory. This is arguably offset by the fact that this Fill command takes up very little memory itself and is particularly fast. On the final picture, it makes no real difference anyway.

The ability to look back or delete back either a single step or a whole picture makes correction and modification of pictures very simple indeed. The effect of open or closed doors is just one example of how these features cater for the kind of conditions often required of graphics in adventures. Because it is possible to change the ink during the course of a picture creation and then change it back again, when the whole picture is asked for in the adventure, a limited form of animation is possible. Things such as flashing lights, flowing water or other relatively small changes to detail to a picture can be attained with the minimum of effort.

When it comes to writing adventures without learning machine code, *GAC* and *The Quill* can both look foreboding to first time users. *GAC's* advantage lies in the fact that an entire adventure may be created without the need for loading up different programs or buying add-ons to the basic package. The one thing you need to remember is that no matter how good the utility is, you will not create good games unless you have the imagination to write something exciting and fun, and have the desire to get the best from the program.

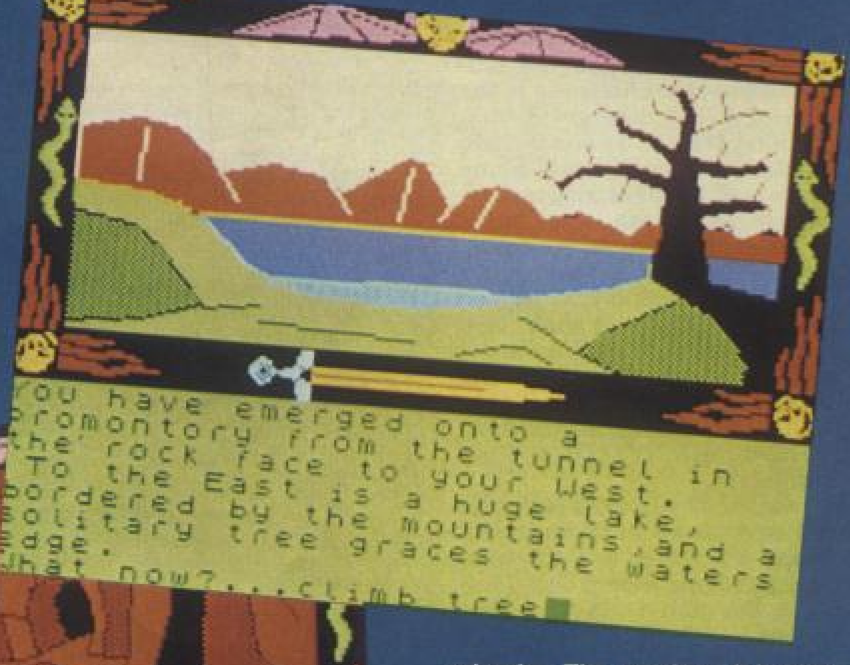
Playing an adventure written on *GAC* for the first time is quite an experience. Being able to input multiple commands (in fact, entire paragraphs) gives you a sense of freedom and power. When it comes to writing an adventure you don't feel as if the limitations of the program will get in your way. The knowledge that after a while, you might come out with something like *The Price of Magik* makes you want to learn more about the system. Once you have built up a little enthusiasm, coming to grips with the package is easy. And it's a lot more flexible and fulfilling than *The Quill*.

The graphic facilities are excellent but a bit more on-screen help would not have come amiss. At first, most of my time was spent flipping through the instruction manual trying to figure out how to actually draw a line on the screen. Fortunately the manual is well written. I can't wait to see the first few commercial adventures written on *GAC*. *The Quill* is dead. Long live *GAC*!

Up to 10,000 separate pictures can be held in a GAC game, though it's extremely unlikely that more than a fraction of this number would actually be used. Because of the way pictures are tied to locations it's possible to have small pictures created as inserts, displaying recently acquired objects for instance. The potential for experimentation is enormous.

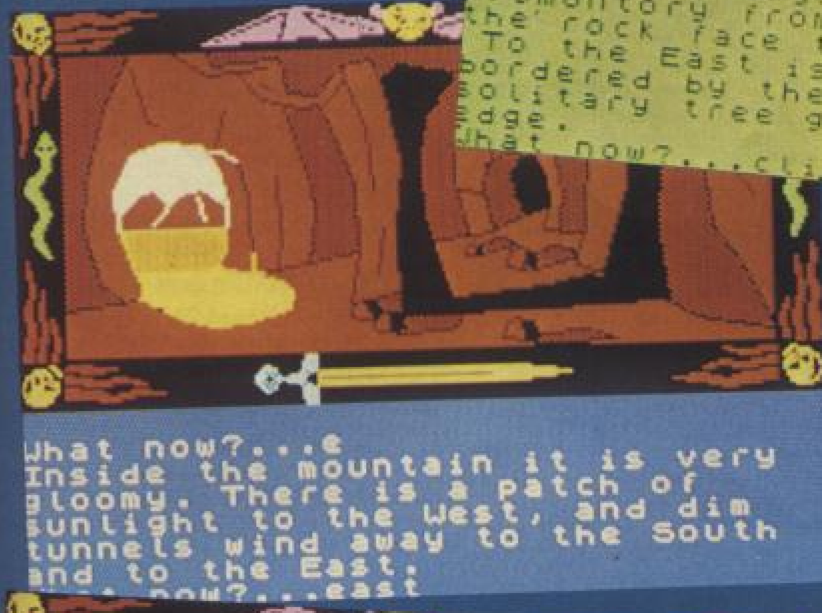
As is the case with most other adventure writers, GAC allows up to 255 words to be defined as part of the adventuring vocabulary. As full word recognition is catered for in GAC, shortened versions of words (such as EXAM for EXAMINE) have to be created as synonyms by giving them the same numerical value in the vocabulary table. This does, however create the opportunity for more diversity and flexibility. One aspect of GAC which is slightly unusual is that unlike The Quill, words are stored alphabetically instead of numerically. This means the vocabulary has continuity, but

TURES



synonyms are harder to locate while editing.

Up to 765 words can be used, 255 each of nouns, verbs and adverbs. The section 'Adverbs' actually includes prepositions, so the label is an arbitrary rather than a linguistic one! However, this allows for detailed analysis of each line of player input and consequently, greater flexibility in terms of acceptable player response.







The interpreter is the real gem in GAC. If you have ever wanted to create LEVEL 9 style adventures but have been held back by the limitations of The Quill or lack of programming ability, then this is where GAC can solve your problems. Commands are not limited to verb/noun input or single command per sentence input. Instead, a whole series of commands may be entered so long as the adventure author has taken full advantage of the very sophisticated parser. Multiple commands may be punctuated by 'AND', 'THEN', '.' or ',' in any fashion the author requires.

'IT' recognition is also possible if IT is made object number 255. This way it always refers to the last noun mentioned. This allows commands such as GET THE LAMP THEN LIGHT IT to be used. As mentioned earlier, the best part about the parser is the fact that commands may be as long as the player likes. If an error is made part way through the command (such as trying to get an object that isn't there), the rest of the command is ignored.

Another area where GAC excels is with the conditions. GAC uses High, Low and Local priority conditions to set up certain events under particular circumstances. GAC checks a High condition before the player has the opportunity to make an input. Checking whether a lamp is switched on can be made a High condition, which governs whether the player can see in a dark location.

Local conditions are those that only apply in a particular room or situation. If you left an airlock without a space suit for example and the author had taken full advantage of the condition facilities, GAC would check for a spacesuit and kill you before you could do anything else. Low priority conditions are checked in the same way as local ones except that they are not confined to individual rooms. They might check that you were carrying an object, simply to ensure a message continued to appear.

GAC has more flexibility than any other adventure writing utility I have seen because of the vast numbers of counters and markers it has. One obvious example of this flexibility is the ability to give objects weights and then allow a player to carry a maximum weight. This is far more desirable than just allowing a certain number of objects to be carried regardless of how massive or miniscule they may be.

Clever use of the 255 messages allowed — breaking them down into commonly used segments — saves memory and increases the apparent number of messages in the adventure. This technique is not exclusive to GAC but it is reassuring to see that such things are possible nevertheless.

Editing any part of a GAC adventure is simplicity itself. Everything is well explained in the excellently written manual and all the different parts of GAC are accessed from a main menu. The whole effort has been logically devised. One great advantage is that you can do anything from the main menu — loading separate programs to add graphics is now something of the past.

Though the package sells at a price that can hardly be called cheap, all things are relative. When you compare this to the competition both in terms of price and performance, it comes out way on top. Future, more powerful versions are planned (which may allow redefinable character sets) but this should not put you off getting hold of a copy as soon as possible, as any future version will be a while off yet.

GAC has already set a new standard on other micros. INCENTIVE have learned from the odd shortcomings of earlier versions, and Spectrum owners benefit from modifications made in the light of INCENTIVE's earlier experience. The response to this product should be extraordinary. Before rushing off to part with your money, take a peek at the News Pages in this issue, where there should be details of a money-saving offer!

LLOYD MANGRAM'S HALL OF SLIME



Green Beret Completed
Mikie Completed
Bruce Lee Completed
Kokotoni Wilf Completed
Sacha Poyse, Tourcoing, France

Deathchase Completed, £94,485
Exploding Fist 10th dan (five times), 73,700
Starstrike I 660,700
Starstrike II 8 planets destroyed, 26,450
Spyhunter 93425
Fighting Warrior 65,4460
Yie Ar Kung Fu 199500, 40th level
Bombjack 260780
Atic Atac Completed
Rambo Completed
Sabre Wulf Completed
Cookie Completed
Antony Homfray, Salisbury, Wiltshire

Beach Head Completed, 112,000
Bombjack 154,000
Bounty Bob Strikes Back 22,000
Bruce Lee Beaten Wizard five times with 294,325
Football Manager Won First Division Championship and FA Cup five years running
Ghostbusters 77,OOO
Hampstead Completed
Harrier Attack Completed
Hobbit Completed
Inca Curse Completed
Jet Set Willy 52 objects
Jet Set Willy II 69 objects
Monty on the Run 1,650
Match Day Won 16-0 in final
Planet of Death Completed
Pyjamarama Completed
Quazatron 7,300
Roller Coaster 7,600
Spellbound 76%
Scrabble Won at all levels
Samantha Fox Strip Poker All six pictures
St Andrews Golf 6 under par at eighteenth
Skool Daze Completed
World Cup Won final 6-0
World Series Baseball Won 112-3
World Series Basketball Beaten level 3, 29-24
Zorro Completed around 40,000
Toby Blake, Inverness, Scotland

Commando Stage 4
Chuckie Egg Stage twenty-five
Bombjack 245,800
Hunchback Stage 8
Yie Ar Kung Fu Completed
Robin of the Wood Completed
Shrinking Fireman Completed
Saboteur Completed
Cauldron Completed
Hunchback II Completed
Dangermouse Completed
David Newsum Scawsby, South Yorkshire

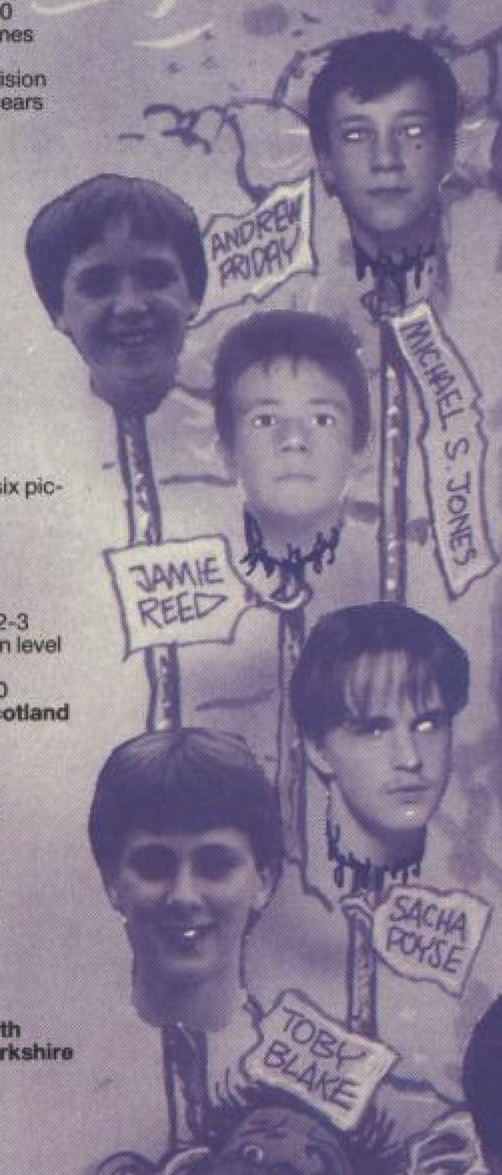
Green Beret Completed
Mikie Round game three times
Commando Area 13
Frank Bruno Completed
Saboteur Completed
Barry McGuigan Beaten Barry
Automania Two cars
Andrew Friday, Leeds, West Yorkshire

So. We have booked the ultimate slimester challenge in the form of a Programmer Playoff, featuring *Match Day* and the two people who wrote the game which will be held in October. Further details are to be found on the Editorial pages this issue, but if you reckon you're in with a chance of beating Jon Ritman **and** Chris Clarke **at their own game (literally), make sure to get your name and address in to the CRASH MATCH DAY CHALLENGE, PO BOX 10. LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB as soon as you can.**

Beware. The Ludlow Gibbet is well maintained and if we end up shipping a fibber to Ludlow to take part in the *Match Day Challenge*, the gibbet will come into action!

Ponder on that, my lovlies. Meanwhile, here's another monthly dose of High Score Gore . . .

Sabrewulf Completed
Underwurlde Completed
Knightlore Completed
Alien 8 Completed
Yabba Dabba Doo Completed
StarQuake Completed
Bruce Lee Completed 25 times
Monty Mole Completed
Monty on the Run Completed
Monty is Innocent Completed
Skooldaze Completed
Back to Skool Completed
Starstrike Completed
Starstrike II Completed
Gyroscope Completed
Nightshade Completed
Gunfright Completed
Atic Atac Completed
Manic Miner Completed
Jet Set Willy Completed
Jet Set Willy II Completed
Avalon Completed
Dragontorc Completed
Fairlight Completed
Tir Na Nog Completed
Dun Darach Completed
Pyjarama Completed
Herbert's Dummy Run Completed
Three Weeks in Paradise Completed
Shadowfire Completed
Enigma Force Completed
Mikie Completed
Way of the Tiger Completed
Kokitoni Wilf Completed
Airwolf Completed
Cosmic Wartoad Completed
Nodes of Yesod Completed
Arc of Yesod Completed
Robin of the Wood Completed
Ghostbusters Completed
Hunchback Completed
Hunchback II Completed
Witches Cauldron Completed
Mark Cairns, Lisburn, Northern Ireland



Hunchback II Last screen
Wizard's Lair 2 pieces of Golden Lion
Gunfright Lone Ranger
Saboteur Completed level 3
Commando Level 3
Exploding Fist 6th dan
Match Day Won Final 11-0
Kung Fu Black Belt
Chuckie Egg Level 8
Green Beret 2nd paratrooper on the harbour
Bomb Jack Got round 7 times, 107,000
Spy Hunter Icy roads
Bruce Lee Retired after killing wizard 10 times because fingers had cramp
Everyone's a Wally Completed
Three Weeks in Paradise Completed
Pitfall 2 Completed
Knightsoft Poker Completed
Alien Completed
Football Manager Division 1 in four seasons
Ghostbusters Completed
Jamie Reed, South Shields, Tyne and Wear

Commando Area 6
Cookie Baked Cake
Ghostbusters Completed
Jungle Trouble Completed
Matchday Won 8-2 in Final
Mikie Clocked twice
Rocco Won World Championship
Saboteur Completed levels 1 and 2
Sai Combat 8th Dan
World Cup Carnival Won World Cup
SID, Hounslow, London

Starstrike 1,000,000
Knight Lore 13 Charms, 68%
Beach Head 105,400
Atic Atac Completed
Commando 198,500, level 9
Hypersports 200,822; Swimming, 27.2 seconds; Skeet Shooting, 91,000; Vault, 8.80; Archery, 4,000; Triple Jump, 13.24; Weight Lifting 185kg
Ghosts and Goblins 171,400; rescued Princess
Sweevo's World 67%
Bombjack 1,269,880
Roller Coaster 5,800
Green Beret 122,300; Prison Camp
Rebelstar Completed
Match Day 12-0 Final
Alien 8 12 cyrogenic chambers
Sabre Wulf 61,180; 3 pieces of amulet
Galaxians 70,000
PSSST 36,780
Pyramid 118,304; Completed
Tommy Nash, Jacksdale, Notts

Bomb Jack 732,428
Sai Combat 7th Dan, Black Belt
Jetpac 420,150; completed four times
Manic Miner 14th level
Trash Man 3rd Street
Airwolf Three scientists rescued
Nodes of Yesod 41%
Rambo 12,000
Chuckie Egg 21st level; 232,400
Chequered Flag Every track done in just three minutes
Tranz Am two cups
Tomohawk Mission 1, 4 tanks, 4 field guns, 2 choppers
Exploding Fist 8th Dan
Rocky Horror Show Completed
Hypersports Completed three times; Swimming, 26.5 seconds; Skeet Shooting, 910; Vault 9.38; Archery 3750; Triple Jump 15m 78; Weight Lifting, Bantam Weight
Simon Mossman, Wallasey, Merseyside

Ant Attack 4 Girls Rescued
Saboteur Completed Level 2
Commando 488,055; level 210
Airwolf 4 Scientists Rescued
Strontium Dog Completed and mapped
Kung Fu Completed
Booty 28 objects collected
Sabre Wulf Completed 89%
Flight from the Dark Completed
Yi Ar Kung Fu 1,586,000; level 210
Harrier Attack Completed, all difficulties
Eureka Prehistoric adventure completed; 50% Ancient Rome completed
Cookie Baked one cake
System 15,000 Completed
Gift from the Gods 4 shapes
Frankie 98%
Exploding Fist 175,500; 10th Dan
Roller Coaster 10,000
Fairlight Got Book of Light
Chuckie Egg 26th Sheet
Transformers One and-a-half faces
Spyhunter 209,800 novice
International Karate Been to all countries
Jet Set Willy 46 objects
Cyberun 162,800; 7 add ons
Green Beret Got to bridge
Death Chase 8th level
Rocky Horror Show 14 pieces
Starquake Completed 56%
Mikie Completed twice
Starstrike II Destroyed Beta and Gamma with 730,600
Gunfright Killed three baddies
Critical Mass Completed
S Jones, Clapham, London



MICRO GAMES ACTION

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WINNERS & PRIZES



DOMARK SPLIT PERSONALITIES

DOMARK offered a set of full-colour screen dumps from their latest game, the CRASH Smashed *Split Personalities* as the first prize in this competition. As well as acquiring this colourful prize, **Brian Frost** of Small Lane L39 4RD, who just so happens to be the winner, also gets to have a "Domarked for Life" t-shirt and a signed poster.

Ten runners-up win a Domark t-shirt and a signed poster and the next forty correct entries pulled out of Graeme Kidd's Doc Marten boot will receive signed posters of the game *Split Personalities*. *All fifty one winners will also be receiving either a Ronnie Reagan or a Margaret Thatcher Pet Hate* which squeeks and is a rubbery caricature of the popular politicians.

All these prizes for simply re-arranging Ronnie Reagan's face. I know a lot of people who'd do that for far less. . . . !

T SHIRT AND POSTER WINNERS:

Adam Hold, Hill Crest, AL10 8EZ; C McRobert, Martello Avenue, BT18 0DH; Lee J Haywood, Wyvern Avenue, NG10 1AG; Robert Taylor, Cherry Crescent, TW8 8NN; Paul Shean, Beaufort Close, LN2 4SF; Andrew Beevers, Glebe Road, S64 8LD; Graham Parker, Hogarth Drive, NE38 7LA; N Wilson, Locke Lane, S70 1QH; Derek B Russell, Rosemount Drive, EH52 6DE; D Ross, Croft Place, AB3 9TE

SIGNED POSTER PEOPLE:

Tim Carpenter, Mill Rise, HU14 3PU; D Overy, Peninsula Rd, SO22 4PA; Spencer Cannon, Norwich Drive, BN2 4LL; S Sands, Tudor Crescent, TN14 5QT; Adrain Shaw, Saunders Lane, SO51 0GP; David Bone, Melrose Avenue, NE31 2JF; Steven J Wheller, Lon-Y-Coed, CF31 4UA; Barry Gorman, Ballygreen Drive, BT28 1SU; Simon Pendry, The Glade, WN6 8DJ; Steven Ellis, Wansbeck Rd, NE32 5SS; Sean Crees, Newlands Lane, PO19 3AX; Craig Dorrance, Wyndhurst Rd, B33 9JN; Wayne Haddock, Macdonald Close, B69 3LD; Chris Topham, Cliff St, WF2 0DW; Justin Davies, Oakridge Acres, SA70 8DB; Andrew Needham, Cropston Rd, LE7 7BR; Matthew Richards, Powells Court, NP5 3DA; Joe Rebbeck, Highfield Rd, BD9 4HY; Kevin Bardon, High Street, YO6 7AE; Paul Robertson, Annan Avenue, G75 8XT; Alan Walton, Peel Close, BB2 3NG; Warren Berkley, Stack Lane, DA3 8BL; C Yau, Delancey Sreet, NW1 7RX; Nick Wearn, Maylands Avenue, PO4 8SB; Lee Sefton, Denmark Rd, N8 0DZ; Richard Gaherty, Kippax Avenue, BA5 2TT; Mr A P A Morris, Rycroft, SL4 4HQ; Charles Penning, Den-Maag, Netherlands; Daniell Ball, Copse close, SL7 2NY; David Wheeler, Berkley Rd, CV8 1AQ; Craig Spires, Cross Terrace, EN9 3OQ; Miguel Soaires, Rua Inacio De Sousa, Portugal; Jacob H christensen, Seabank Rd, IV12 4EY; Phillip Jenkins, Birchgrove rd, CF4 1RS; Robert Graham, Rotherwick Rd, NW11 7DG; Ian Hunter, All Saints Close, CM1 5HT; Nick Wrightson, Malsis Rd, BD21 1EY; Stephen Baxter, Tregaron, SY25 6CN; Jim Gillon, Proctor Way, CO6 1XE; Mark Hansgate, Moorside Terrace, BD11 1HX

BIGGLES TAKES TO THE AIR

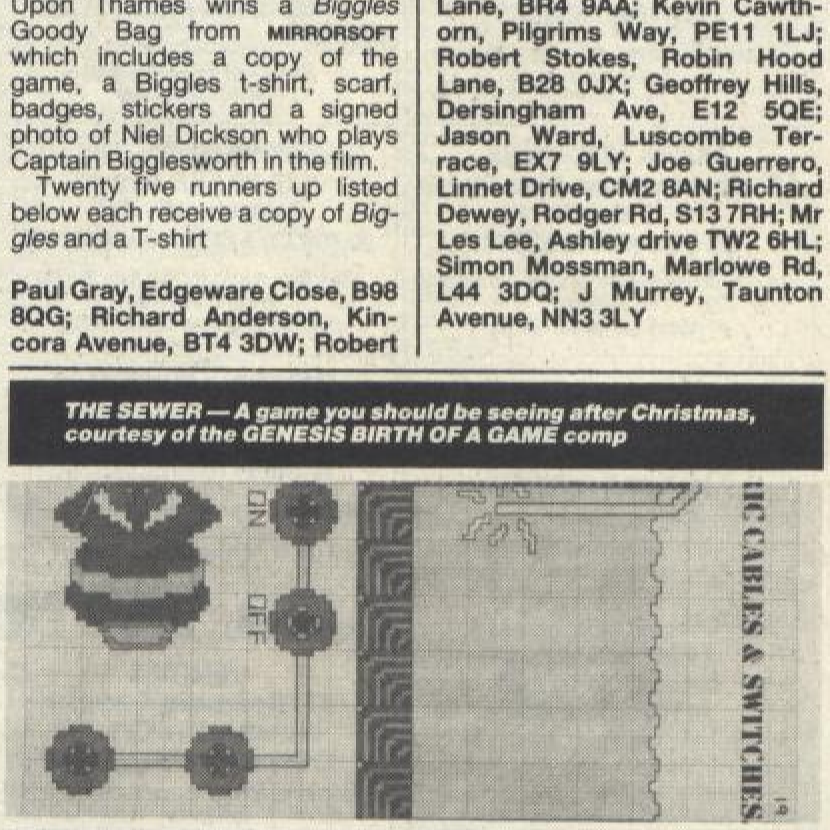
Way back in Issue 30 when Biggles fever was rife in the CRASH office and various Database Minions (Gary Sumpter for one) took to dressing up as their war-time hero, **MIRRORSOFT** offered a whole range of goddies as the prizes to their *Biggles* Competition.

No, the task was not to see how silly you could look by dressing up in a tattered flying jacket and stick on handlebar moustache. If it had been, then Mr Sumpter would have won hands down! Oli drew a couple of piccies of Biggles, and you had to spot as many differences as possible. The winner, **Alister Robson** from Kingston Upon Thames wins a *Biggles* Goody Bag from **MIRRORSOFT** which includes a copy of the game, a Biggles t-shirt, scarf, badges, stickers and a signed photo of Niel Dickson who plays Captain Bigglesworth in the film.

Twenty five runners up listed below each receive a copy of *Biggles* and a T-shirt

Paul Gray, Edgeware Close, B98 8QG; Richard Anderson, Kincora Avenue, BT4 3DW; Robert Bond, Engineer's Flat, SE1 8XX; Elliot Swindells, Fitzhenry Mews, NR5 9BH; David Young, Barrards Way, HP9 2YZ; F A Beale, Hinton Close, DT11 7RS; M J Dunn, Carberry Rd, LS6 1QQ; Paul James, Leake Rd, NG11 0JN; Sean Smith, Bentham Grammer School, Lancs; William Black, Afton Drive Scotland, PA4 0XH; Simon Heasman, Limpsfield Road CR2 9EF; Micheal Avery, Crag Side, DH2 2TN; C Sanderson Queensway, WA16 0NN; Kevin Devine, Thornhill, YO11 3LY; Jayne Pritchard, Troubridge Rd, TR13 8DH; Andrew Murray, Hawes Lane, BR4 9AA; Kevin Cawthorn, Pilgrims Way, PE11 1LJ; Robert Stokes, Robin Hood Lane, B28 0JX; Geoffrey Hills, Dersingham Ave, E12 5QE; Jason Ward, Luscombe Terrace, EX7 9LY; Joe Guerrero, Linnet Drive, CM2 8AN; Richard Dewey, Rodger Rd, S13 7RH; Mr Les Lee, Ashley drive TW2 6HL; Simon Mossman, Marlowe Rd, L44 3DQ; J Murrey, Taunton Avenue, NN3 3LY

THE SEWER — A game you should be seeing after Christmas, courtesy of the GENESIS BIRTH OF A GAME comp



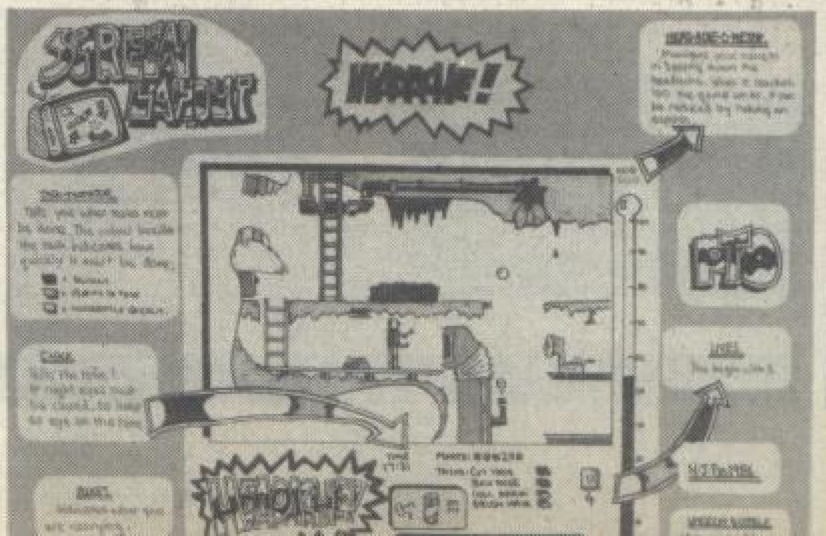


The GENESIS judging team in full session.

Graham Stafford and Mark Strachan hold the winning entries



HEADACHE — the GENESIS entry from Nigel Palmer



Martin Lee won't be bathing in fame until early next year — DESIGN DESIGN have got a heavy schedule at the moment and had only reserved enough time to write one game for GENESIS before Christmas. Martin's arcade adventure should be on a Spectrum near you by Springtime, though . . .

MORE GENESIS RESULTS

As you may have realised (if you peeked at the News Input pages before you got here) the judges for the GENESIS Birth of a Game competition had a terribly difficult time of it.

Apart from the two, yes two, winners, **Ian Bell** of Leeds impressed the judges with his Lemming game and **Nigel Palmer** of Norwich who game up with a complete package on *Headche* were worthy of a special mention, the judges decided. These two fellows will soon be sent a collection of goodies from the coffers and storerooms of **DOMARK** and **DESIGN DESIGN** as a token of the judges' respect!

Watch out for a progress report, next munf!





A detail from the winning Minion Map submitted by A Powis



SAVING A MINION PAIN

The Comps Minion's life is not a happy one as you have probably gathered. In the "Save A Minion Pain" competition in issue 30, you had to design a map of CRASH Towers to help our put-upon Minion avoid the perils of Editorial, the Art department and all the terrors that lurk in between. **A Powis** of Harold Rd, Cuxton ME2 1EE is the cartographical whizz who wins and will soon the proud owner of a Hologram made **HOLOGRAFIX** and a 1987 Tolkein calendar.

Fifty runners up each receive a copy of the new repackaged *Hobbit* to play and enjoy at their leisure.

Bryn Pritchard, Penhalvean, TR16 6TQ; Andrew Edwards, New Road PO2 7RS; M Adams, Poplar Avenue, Norfolk; Jared Smith, Wilton Bank, TS12 1PD; Mark Sibson, Teall Court, WF5 0PF; Jeffery Fuge, Dundridge Lane, B55 8SN; Stuart Whapples, Knox Lane HG1 3AW; Matthew Gilbert, Julius Rd, BS7 8EU; Paul Rosbotham, Elstead Grove, WN4 0RJ; Daniel Watkins, Meadow Rise DY12 1JS; David J Jackson, Landsmoor Drive, PR4 5PE; Shaun Hill, Finlay Close ME13 7SH; Kevin Curtin, Elmgrove, IV12 4SN; K Jamil, Gladstone, NW2 6LA; Derek Jenkins, Fishguard Rd, CF4 5PU; Thomas McDermott, Main St, Ireland; Alan Walton, Peel Close, BB2 3NG; Allan Price, Calverley, LS13 1HF; Paul Williams, Dane Grove, ST10 1QS; David Watero, Penglais Road, SY23 2EU; D Gorton, Revidge Rd, BB1 8DJ; David Gosnell, Sixty Acres Rd, HP16 0PE; Tim Twelves, Averstone Street, SE11 5TS; A Minson, The Garden House, SG14 3RU; Richard Cross, London Rd, PO7 7AL; Neil Hibbs, Moor Lane, M23 0LY; Stephen Kelly, Wickdown Ave, Swindon; Sean Cooney, Galway Rd Eire; Jamie Orr, Humbie, EH36 5PN; Lee Prutton, Jubilee Crescent, SG15 6SB; Tim Dobbin, Hall Lane, PO20 8PZ; Duncan Harvey, Mousehold Lane, NR7 8HL; Derek Conniffe, Goats Town, Ireland; Gareth Owen, Enniskeen, BT65 4AB; Paul Wheatley, LE6 0GT; Roger Houghton, WN7 3VQ; Gareth Young, Hogarth Place, OX14 5LR; Dave Martin, Esthwaite Grove, DL14 9LU; Gary Wedge, Newhall St, WS11 1AD; Ian King, Tipton, DY4 8BH; Brendan Davies, Maes Hyfryd, LL58 8EY; Antony Layzell, Lorton Avenue, CA14 3JF; Steven Edwards, Portland Gardens, TR11 2QT; Alan Packard, Fulmas Rd, RM12 5LL; Christopher Lewis, Oakhill Rd, Surrey; Chris Beales, Limetree Gardens, NG14 7DJ; Kevin Willocks, Vicarage Rd, TW16 7UB; Alex Ng, Llanelian Rd LL29 9UH; Stuart Lawson, Freelands Crescent, Glasgow G60 5DZ

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3	
4	
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PCW Show PREVIEW

Coming soon to a Spectrum near you!

THE GREATEST SHOW ON . . . ON . . . ON SPECTRUMS!

This year's Personal Computer World Show, held during the first week of September, is going to be bursting at the seams with new games for the Spectrum. Several new games labels are being launched at the show as well as just games, and the halls are likely to be more packed than ever. This month, we have expanded the Preview section to bring you as much news as we can about the goodies that will be on offer during the PCW Show — the Event of the Year in the games world . . .

It's simply impossible to fit all the news about the new Spectrum products that should be making an appearance at the PCW Show into the amount of space we have available. With luck, you should be reading this in time to try to make plans to pay a personal visit to Olympia to see everything for yourself — it's going to be an exciting few days. Interesting things are going to be happening. . . .

DOMARK, for instance, plan to launch *Trivial Pursuit* on their stand at the show, and they have 500 copies, and only 500 copies, of the game for sale on the Friday. They're going to give the first one away free, sell the next one for 2p, the one after that for 4p and so on, until the 500th customer pays £10 (and still saves the greater part of a fiver.)

BEYOND are planning to announce *Star Trek*, the official Kirk and Spock game, and they've built their whole stand to resemble the Bridge of the Starship Enterprise!

Between them, OCEAN and IMAGINE have lots to announce, including the official game taken from the TV show, It's A Knockout. Half a dozen events, specially designed by the producer of the TV series are included in the game, including one flying flan event where you have to bounce up and down on trampolines while flinging custard pies! They'll have videos to whet your appetite for forthcoming releases, too, including *Top Gun*, *Short Circuit*, *Miami Vice*, and *Galvan*. *The Great Escape*, programmed by the DENTON DESIGNS team could well be on display along with a preview of the game from the film Highlander. Coin-op machines will almost certainly be on the stand, set to free play an'all, including: *Mag Max*, *Terra Cresta*, *Green Beret*, *Galvan*, and *Yie Ar Kung Fu*.

Who knows? *Street Hawk* and *Night Rider* might even make an appearance . . .

MASTERTRONIC aim to make a splash with *Flash Gordon* — although a Spectrum version won't be at the show. The game sounds a lot of fun. You have to make your way through four levels — a cave scene, jungle scene, hover-bike riding sequence and palace finale — on the quest to defeat Ming the Merciless. There's also a rumour that MASTER TEE are going to make an announcement about a completely different sort of product that doesn't have too much to do with computer games. . . .

Moonlight Madness and *Ice Temple* could well be ready in time for BUBBLE BUS to reveal them to you in all their glory, and GLOBAL plan to have their next Golden Turkey Tie-in, *Attack of the Mushroom People* ready for the show. ACTIVISION were still being a little secretive as this issue went to press, but mentioned *Hacker II — The Domesday Papers*, along with *Howard The Duck*, *The Eidolon* and *Labrynth* as well as several 128K launches pending, including a version of *Ghostbusters*.

US GOLD, as you might imagine, also has an exciting schedule of releases planned for the Autumn, including a game based on the TV series Masters of the Universe, and several arcade conversions amongst which *Gauntlet* rides high. Dare they have a *Gauntlet* machine set on free play by their stand? We had hoped to bring you a full run-down on US GOLD's Spectrum launches, but the dreaded deadlines in combination with staff hols combined to frustrate our ambition. Ask a Commodore owning friend for a peek at Issue 17 of ZZAP! if you want some more details before the show . . .

And with that apology, on with the previews:

GREMLIN GO TO TOWN

If you liked *The Way of the Tiger*, why not have a peek at the sequel, GREMLIN GRAPHICS' *Avenger*, due for release in September. The basic plot is this. The god Kwon has had his scrolls nicked by the evil Yaeman. This wouldn't be so bad but the fact is, if he doesn't get them back he will die. No wonder he's not very happy!

So, it's your job to get them back by locating the castle where they're hidden and killing your three main opponents one of whom is the thief, Yaeman. Before the big fights, there are lesser nasties to destroy, puzzles to solve and various items to find. And, of course, there's the dreaded cavern monster that must be killed. The monster's blood, which is poisonous, is very important because it can be used to kill the castle guards and Yaeman himself. The trouble is, it can also poison the bearer so you have to steal the cure from the local monastery.

Rather than viewing the scrolling action from the side, you look down on the high resolution graphics. A humorous feature is the help you get from old Kwon in the form of a giant hand. Don't call on him too much, however, as he's likely to bonk you on the head!

More sporting action is due from GREMLIN in the form of *Footballer of the Year*, a simulation in which you take on the role of a professional footballer. The aim of the game, as the title suggests, is to win the Footballer of the Year award. Starting off as a raw seventeen year old, with £500 is cash and playing for a fourth division team, you must develop a successful career. If this can be done, you'll get to play in all the major competitions and might end up with the coveted award.

In *Trailblazer*, determination, speed and agility are the key qualities required. Controlling a ball travelling along a chequered roadway that scrolls 'out' of the screen, the aim is to avoid cracks whilst making sure that your sphere doesn't fall off the path. Several kinds of surface seriously hinder progress either by speeding you up or slowing you down — these must be identified and avoided at all costs. Otherwise, your head might bounce!

More romantic perhaps is *Future Knight* in which Randolph has to locate and rescue his beloved Amelia who has been imprisoned by Spegbott the Terrible. Randolph receives an inter-dimensional distress signal from the SS Rust Bucket and rushes for the Teleport right away. Once on board the wrecked space cruiser, he has to destroy the security droids and make his way to the planet surface. Then it's time to find the castle where his damsel is imprisoned. But before he can rescue her he must get past the formidable keeper who guards the castle.

Good old Kwon, he's always ready to give you a hand when you need help.



ELECTRIFYING STUFF!

A couple of movie tie-ins are in the pipeline from ELECTRIC DREAMS, including *Alien (II)*, based on the new film starring that endearing Mambo, Ripley. After her spot of bother with the alien creature in space, Ms Ripley returns to Earth and explains what has happened. Nobody, of course, heeds her warnings of the alien threat.

Returning to the planet where the first alien was discovered, she finds that a mother alien is laying enormous quantities of eggs. The aim of the game is to locate the mother alien and destroy her, zapping aliens encountered en route. Corporal Hicks and Vasquez accompany the heroine, and the player can control each member of the party. Sounds like good stomach-churning stuff!

Big Trouble in Little China is based on one of **Steven Spielberg**'s underground kung-fu movies. Kirk Russell, a truck-driver, goes with his friend to collect a green-eyed Chinese girl from the airport. Before they get there, however, she is kidnapped by Lo-Pan, not only a criminal but a sorcerer to boot. He needs her for some vague necromantic rite which will rejuvenate him. Understandably, the object of the game is to locate the kidnapped girl and set her free before Lo-Pan has his wicked magical way . . .

TAKING A NEW DIRECTION

In the beginning, ARIOLASOFT concentrated on the Commodore. Then they saw the error of their ways, and began to pay some attention to the Spectrum. Now they are about to launch some very interesting games indeed . . .

In *Deactivator* you've been asked to keep an eye on a secret research complex, aided by a collection of Security Droids. Safe in the knowledge that they are taking care of the guard duties, you start to become a bit complacent. Suddenly, while you're grabbing another quick break, the baddies sneak in. The Security systems are alerted but the intruders are far too smart. They tamper with the main computer and re-program the Security Droids to help them instead.

The intruders sneak through the building planting bombs and as fuses begin to sizzle, you realise that there's only one thing left to do. Call in the Deactivating Droids. These work as a team to dispose of bombs, but are vulnerable, and can be taken out by the renegade Security Droids.

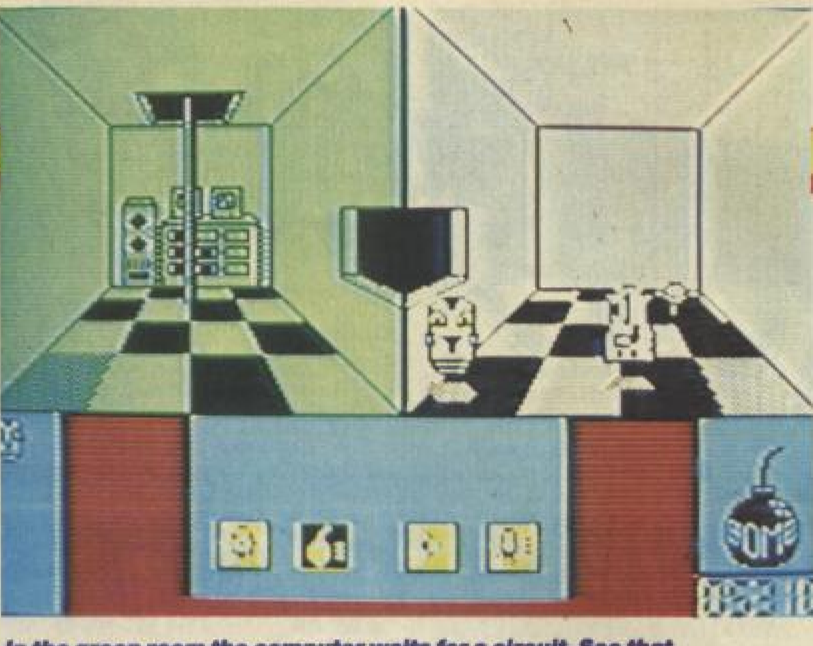
The Deactivating Droids have to be guided around the complex passing the bombs from one to another. Each level of the building contains circuits which must be replaced in the main computer before the bombs can be collected. Once the circuits have been slotted in, the transporters can be fixed and new exits miraculously appear.

To make things a bit more tricky each different coloured room has a different gravity and a different general perspective — which poses quite a few problems when it comes to chucking the bombs out of windows!

They Stole A Million is your chance to become the ultimate robber. Whether you fancy yourself as a Raffles or a Ronnie Biggs, it's all possible with this game. You choose the target, fix yourself a team and study the blueprints to plan the job. Once this has been done, you simply press a button and watch it all happen in front of your very eyes.

There are five different targets for you to choose between, from a coin dealer's premises to a full scale bullion raid, and eighteen ruthless 'hoods' are at your disposal. The game is fully icon-driven and there's an arcade style sequence of the actual 'job'. As you succeed at the robbery business, your capital increases and you can afford to attempt bigger and better heists. Until you get caught.

Camelot Warriors is also due to make its debut at the Show — a mysterious quest undertaken in a mysterious land. Mysteries unfold as you continue on a one-way journey, encountering hidden dangers — killer fish, shocking electric eels and the King of Camelot are just some of the characters you meet up with. Some are friends, others foes . . .



In the green room the computer waits for a circuit. See that tough looking dude fixing you with the ol' evil eye? He's a re-programmed Security Droid and he's not going to be your friend anymore, so there



Standing on a ledge amongst the surreal scenery in CAMELOT WARRIORS. What's the best move from here?

ON YER BIKES! GET SET, GO!

If you're a bike freak then don't miss the DIGITAL INTEGRATION stand. Not only will they have an actual Suzuki bike on display, but some of Suzuki's top riders will be there. This is all to publicise their long awaited game *TT Racer* — copies should be available at the show for £9.95.

Taking charge of a Grand Prix bike — the control panel neatly displayed in the bottom quarter of the screen — you see a 3D view of the track you've selected from the 12 available. There are four levels and up to fifteen other bikes (controlled by the computer) to race against. There's a choice of four engine sizes — 80, 125, 250 and 500cc — and it's possible to specify the number of laps you want. The type of event and the number of external bikes can also be specified by the player. The instrumentation panel details the usual gauges and meters — fuel, temperature and speed — with two boxes either side acting as rear-view mirrors.

TT Racer can be played by eight people who compete as individuals against each other — at the Show, you will be able to race against members of the Suzuki team. Suzuki have provided technical assistance in the development of *TT Racer* to make the game as realistic as possible, and it has taken the author, **Rod Swift**, two years to get it to the high standard he was aiming for.

So, get your gear together, rev up and off you go. Remember to look out for the free competition in which you can win a day out with Suzuki!

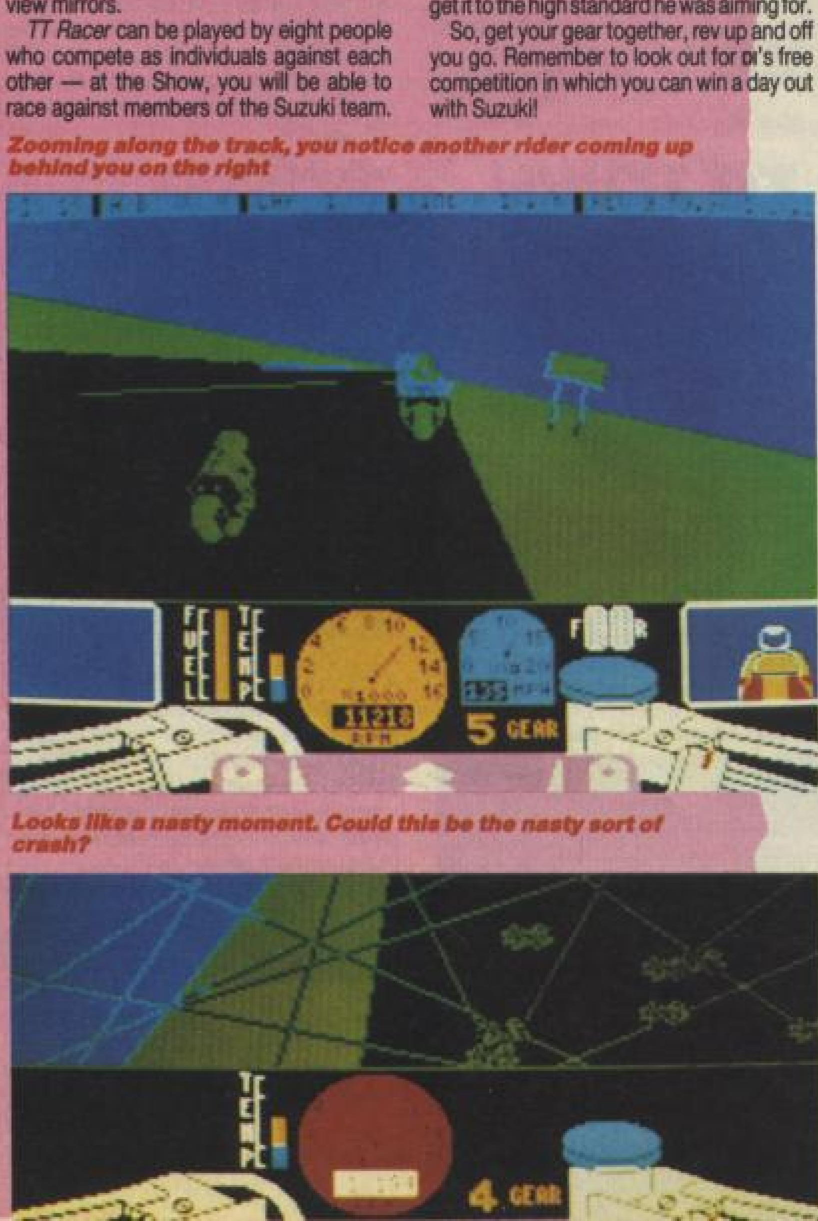
Zooming along the track, you notice another rider coming up behind you on the right



Paul Lewis, SUZUKI's Number One rider skims the tarmac



Looks like a nasty moment. Could this be the nasty sort of crash?



A GAME FOR EVERY TASTE . . .

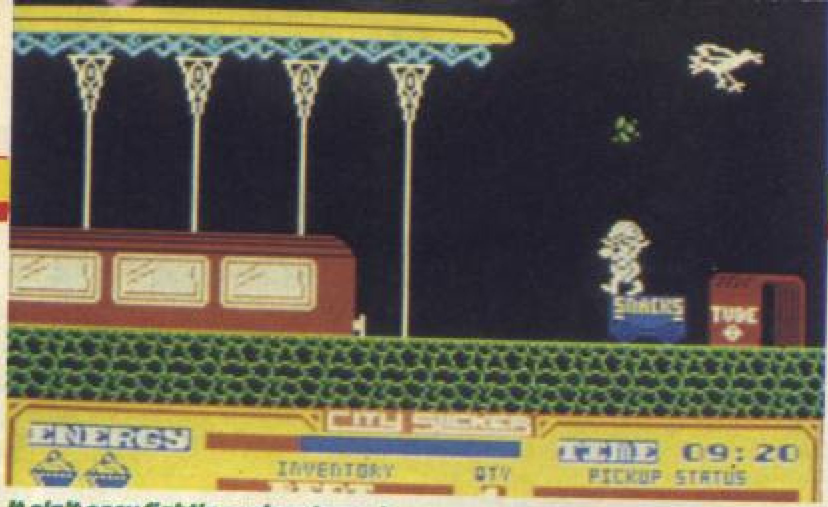
As with many other stands, MARTECH's will have a good deal of variety, and their range of wares includes a shoot em up, a combat game, a simulation and an adventure.

WAR is a fast space age shoot em up. An alien civilisation inhabits an enormous space station which rotates, thereby creating an artificial gravity. This 'world' is composed of a number of cylinders, each of which has an important purpose and is staunchly defended. The idea is to penetrate each cylinder and destroy it before moving on to the next in line.

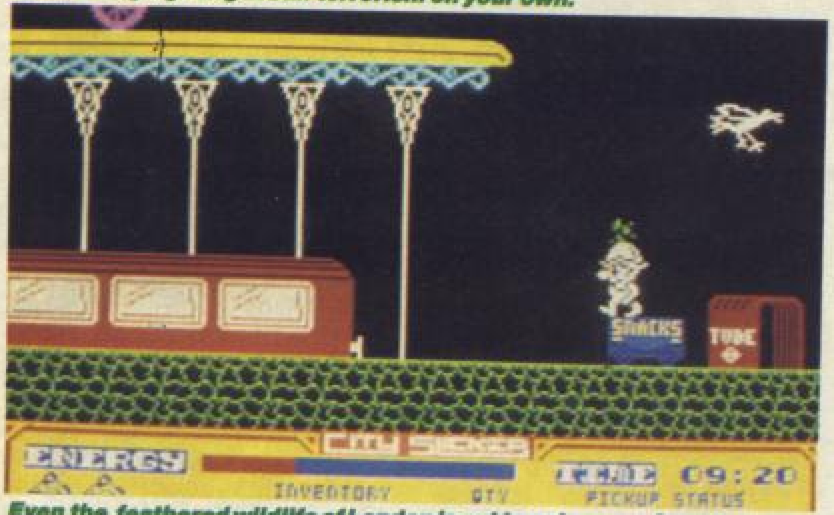
If shoot 'em ups are not your scene, why not try a spoof variety based on a super-hero who's seen better times? In *Cosmic Shock Absorber*, something's gone drastically wrong with the cosmos and the physical laws of the universe no longer apply. In this game anything can happen, and our bungling super-hero encounters some strange doobries on his travels. Ever seen a carrot with a machine gun? Well you soon will! Enclosed in his capsule, it's super-hero's job to sort it all out. The game includes some dazzling 3D routines which have been programmed by **Chris Fayres** of *Zoids* fame.

The hero of Catch 23, *a 3D adventure, is altogether more competent. Under joystick control, he moves in a three-dimensional environment with sabotage in mind. A super-power has built a mega-powerful flying machine and the hero is dropped by parachute at night into the heart of a secret establishment to find out more . . .*

On the combat/sports simulation front, Uchi Mata, *offers the thrills of the Dojo —*



It ain't easy fighting urban terrorism on your own.



Even the feathered wildlife of London is out to get you . . . A nasty green gobbet is seen dropping on our hero's cranium

FANTASY, SPACE and REALITY

Steve Crow is working on his first game for HEWSON (we took an early look last month), and from what we've heard and seen it looks likely to be every bit as good as *Starquake* and *Wizard's Lair*. This one-man band is going to be chasing ULTIMATE all the way . . . Steve has got the trading screens working in *Firelord* now — when you go into a building you can barter with the occupant — and the game is growing daily, according to reports received.

Some people said it couldn't be done. But they don't get put off that easily in Oxfordshire . . . **Dominic Robinson** is slaving away over the keyboard of a hot Spectrum, creating a version of the Commodore hit, *Uridium* and he has retained the outstanding graphics and playing speeds of the original. At the controls of a Manta Class Space Fighter, it's your task to protect the solar system from Enemy attack. Fifteen Super-Dreadnoughts are draining planets of vital minerals and they can only be stopped by attacking their defensive screens, annhilating their surface defences and landing on their master runway.

Meanwhile, up in the Fens, **Steve Marsden** and **David Cooke** are putting the finishing touches to *City Slicker*. They're well on target to complete the game in time for the PCW Show, and seeing as it is set in central London, it should all tie in quite well!

An evil terrorist, Abru Cadabra has planted a very big bomb in Town and you are the only person who can foil his plot to hold the Government to ransom. Scattered around the city are the components of a bomb disposal device, which have to be collected and taken to your secret hideaway for assembly.

Abru appears every so often to hassle you — his touch is deadly — and commuters, policemen and punks are amongst the citizenry you encounter as you travel the streets of London.

Rather than employ the traditional flip-screen display beloved of arcade adventure writers, Steve and David have adopted a half-screen flip technique, which means you don't turn blind corners all the time. The locations are taken from real life, and just as in reality, you can hop aboard tube trains and buses to get from A to B. Unlike real life, your hero can not only stash objects in his pockets, he can collect certain people! (The only way to get a vital object that one of the other characters has nabbed, is to pocket the character, take him to a high place and drop him over the edge. . . .)

yes, it's a judo game. This is an accurate simulation of the sport which concentrates on throws rather than grips or other Judo movements. MARTECH are hoping to win the approval of the Judo Association, and the authors have planned the game so you get better with practice. The game has joystick control and requires speed and skill in equal dollops. Take a look at the live Judo demonstration that will be running next to the MARTECH stand, and if you fancy taking on **Brian Jacks** . . . or you could have a sporting scrap on screen.

Finally, *S.D.I.* — a strategy simulation — takes the player into a future scenario which is firmly rooted in reality. The theme of the game derives from the Reagan Star Wars programme and the concept of laser warfare in space. The game is based on a possible political scenario twenty years into the future and has a number of sections full of 3D arcade action.

Grappling with an opponent on the Judo mat.



Strange goings-on go on in a universe when all the laws of Nature are thrown out of the Cosmic Window. Can you put things right and absorb the Cosmic Shock?





Making your way through the Ice Mountains on the quest for the ultimate booze-up in ZYTHUM

A GLANCE INTO THE MIRROR . .

The MIRRORSOFT team have some dramatic plans for their PCW Show stand, including a laser show on behalf of *Dynamite Dan II* and, with any luck, the presentation of the CRASH jukebox prize from last month's comp. *Zythum* should also be on show . . . it's a game which should please those amongst you who are fond of a drop or two. For zythum, you see, is a drink, but not an ordinary drink. Far from it. Zythum is imbued with magical ingredients which can give you amazing powers! The object of the game is to find the cherished drink as quickly as possible.

The zythum lies somewhere deep within a remote castle. To get to it you have to cross four very bleak and barren lands teeming with nasties with wolf-heads and demon-like wings. Each land has a custodian who must be avoided if you are to cross safely. Fortunately, the staff you are carrying is also magical which means these nasties can be zapped with energy bolts whenever they attack.

The journey across these stretches of land is fraught with problems. Not only are the nasties coming at you from left and right, but there are also lots of pits, boulders and marshes to leap over. Should you step into a marshy area then leaping power is weakened for a while, whilst an encounter with a spring pool makes you sproing all over the place! The closer you are to the castle, the more treacherous the land becomes with the increased danger of stepping on a landmine. Should you be shot by one of the nasties, fall into a pit, or step on a landmine, then you lose one of your three lives.

Phew! All this for the sake of a drink!

COMING UP FROM DOWN UNDER . . .

No, not *Asterix* but *Fist II*, the follow-up to *WOTEF* should be on show at Olympia during September if all goes well, along with a few other goodies from MELBOURNE HOUSE.

Any artful dodgers out there should make sure they get a peek at *Dodgy Geezers*, the game on its way from the team who provided *Hampstead* and *Terrormolinos*.

Well you have been a naughty fellow haven't you. Fancy waking up in jail — still it is the day of your release so you can turn over a new leaf . . . or can you? As a professional criminal, you're already thinking about the next crime, the ultimate caper. But first, a gang has to be picked from a host of dodgy geezers — Bullet Proof George, Little Ken, Mr Video, Tweedle and Blimey O'Reilly.

By consulting the criminal records of each villain, individual skills and specialisms can be noted. The more information that's gathered, the more street cred you acquire, thereby winning the respect of your fellow criminals. Movement through the dark streets is made according to compass directions and up or down. Along the way, objects such as matches, a poster, pickaxe, and book are encountered and can be acquired or dropped. At any stage an inventory can be called up to remind you what you are carrying and where you are.

Once the first part of the game has been completed, a password is issued which allows the serious stuff to begin: planning the crime is all up to you — but make sure it's foolproof, otherwise it's back in clink . . .

Mutiny in Space is the working title of another game under preparation in the MELBOURNE HOUSE camp. Set in a large space ship of the twenty-first century, the crew are cyrogenically sealed in their quarters. Each week, two members of the crew awake to take their turn in controlling the ship and then return to their cyrogenic slumbers. When it comes to your turn, however, it's clear that something has gone wrong — the computers have taken control. It's your job to quell the 'mutiny' by deactivating the rebellious robots that bar your way to each section's computer. There are up to twelve robots at any one time firing lethal projectiles in all directions. Movement from section to section is achieved via a teleporter, which can only be used if the section computer has been neutralised. Lots of fast arcade action is promised by the programmer — **Steven Cargill**, the man behind *Fighting Warrior*.

Finally, there should be something with a Spanish flavour on the stand — not paella but *Conquestador*, a magical adventure game. Lost in a dark castle, you have to find three lights and then discover a route that leads to the great outdoors. Programmed in Spain by ERBE software, the game is to be sold in the UK by MELBOURNE HOUSE starting in early September . . .

OF PREQUELS AND SEQUELS

Building up the graphics in 3D GAME MAKER leads to . . .



. . . this kind of end result

If you feel that your education has been somewhat lacking, why not track down CRL's *Academy*. Written by Peter Cooke of *Tau Ceti* fame, *Academy* is a multi-level game in which you play the part of a Skimmer pilot cadet. In the first level there's a choice of five missions which vary from the straightforward shoot em up to those requiring navigational or other skills. Each mission requires a different set of abilities, and not until you have successfully completed all five can you be passed and move on to the next level. Pete promises some good 3D effects, with realistic shading which changes according to the sun's position in the sky.

One interesting feature of *Academy* is the ability you have to furnish the Skimmer with the specialised equipment you need for a particular mission. In addition, it's possible to design the intrinsic panel deciding, for instance, where the scanner and windows should be. Data may be stored which means that you can take the same Skimmer out again or modify it in the light of experience. *Academy* looks like being a worthy prequel to *Tau Ceti*.

***Cyborg*, written by Ian Foster with graphics by Jon Law, is an arcade adventure which develops the *Tau Ceti* theme, and is seen as the first part of a trilogy. After a horrific accident which he only just survives, Cyborg is rebuilt to become a top security agent. Half-man half-robot (no part Biscuit), his mission is to find a group of scientists who have been sent to investigate an asteroid on collision course with Earth. Exploring the asteroid's subterranean complex, Cyborg has to fight off a host of nasties — fortunately, he is not defenceless: as a mandroid, his arms are replete with an array of sophisticated technology including a particle beam disrupter.**

For those who are into programming your own games, or maybe for those who would like to, CRL are working on *3D Game Maker*. This allows you to create characters, blocks and segments which can then be moved around and integrated to make a complete game. Who's the April Fool now, eh YS?

A game of a different kind altogether is *Dr What*, also featuring Doctors Why, When and Where. This is a bizarre journey back in time to the beginning of the universe. The quack quartet call in at the Big Bang Burger Bar to quaff a drink that's guaranteed to blow their minds: 4D Neuron Blaster! This is the juice extract from the perspiration of the Slug-Slime-Sucking-Sabre Sloth found only in the Hydrogen Marshes of Alpha-Ceta-Minor. The basic idea is that the Doctors are suddenly scattered in time and have to get back home in a universe that is without rules, whilst attempting to pick up their belongings as they go.

A little less zany is *Room 10* which is a kind of 3D ping-pong called Glyding. The room itself is situated in the Galcorp leisure centre and is similar to a squash court. Each goal is worth five points, the winner being the first to thirty-five. Because of the low gravity, the ball floats in the air when it is stationary — for example when it's the service player's turn to bat. There are language options also which means that the game can be played with French or German texts. It's enough to drive you batty ain't it?

MORE ARCADE ACTION

The Aldridge-based game factory that is ELITE has no intention of ceasing production — arcade conversions have become their speciality and two more should be on show by PCW time.

The popular Atari coin-op game *Paperboy* has now found its way onto the Spectrum, and it's a fairly faithful copy of the arcade version which retains most of the central elements of the original game. Pedalling your trusty bike, the aim is to deliver papers to the white houses by chucking them down the driveways into the letter box, while smashing windows in the black houses for bonus points.

Failure to deliver to one of the white houses on your round, means the occupants cancel their order, and the house becomes a black target next time you attempt to traverse the scrolling landscape. Hazards abound on the streets — cars, roadworks and drunks all appear and have to be avoided, while extra supplies of newspapers can be collected by riding over them.

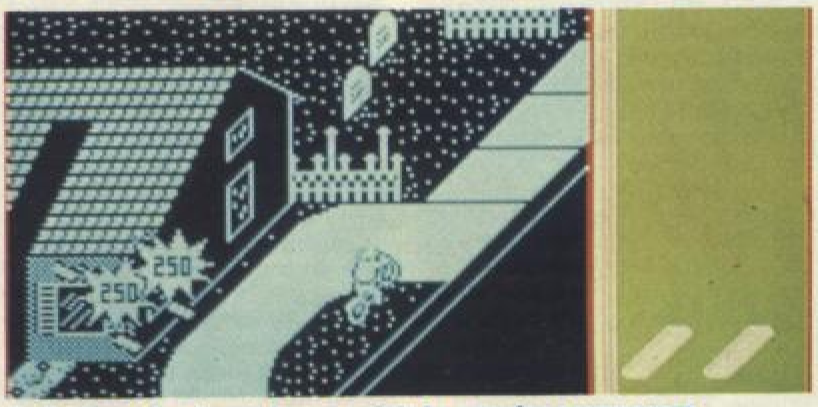
Once the village has been travelled through, there's a BMX obstacle course to negotiate in a cylecross sequence, where extra points can be won by zonking targets with papers as you burn up and down the gradients.

At the end of each run, a performance report is flashed on screen, and providing you have some lives and customers left, the game progresses to the next level where the hazards become that bit more awkward to avoid.

The main action takes place in a downward scrolling play area, and the bike can be accelerated and slowed down as well as steered round obstacles. The large panel on the right shows how many newspapers remain in the delivery satchel.

ELITE are also putting the finishing touches to another Capcom conversion, this time *1942*, an early 32 level air combat game. Each mission starts and ends on the deck of an aircraft carrier, and as the dogfights progress, power pills are awarded which confer differing benefits, from extra fuel to extra firepower.

And finally, the name that has been waiting nearly a year for an ELITE game has finally met its match. *Scooby Doo* was underway this time last year as an in-house project, but it had to be abandoned in the *Castle Mystery* incarnation because the gameplay didn't live up to the ambitious concept. Now GARGOYLE GAMES, working under contract to ELITE have produced a frantic, straightforward four-level rescue game which stars the loveable cartoon hound.

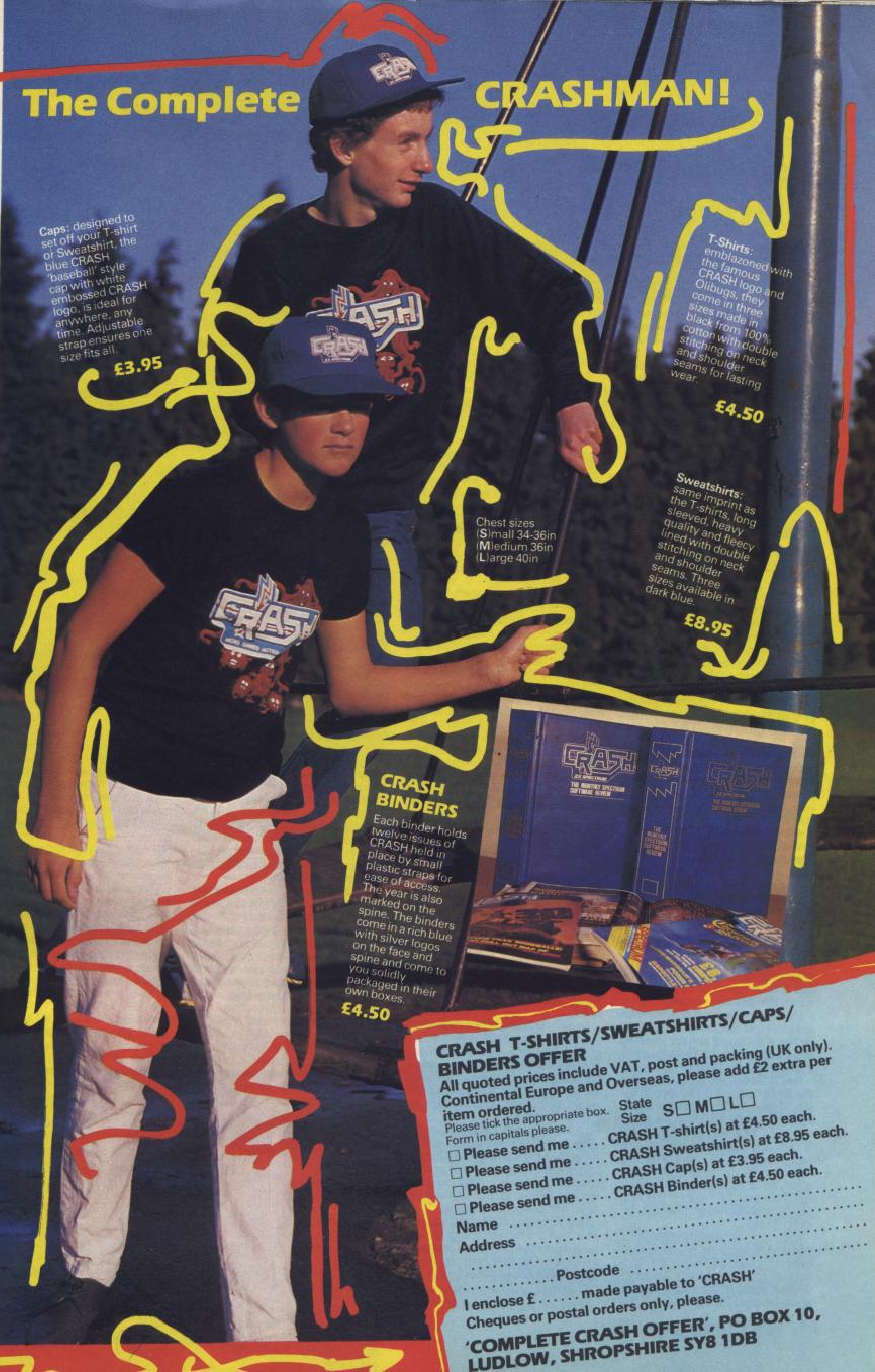


Collecting a few handy bonus points by wanging newspapers through the windows of one of the houses on your round — miserable so and so's should have ordered papers. . . .

Four of your chums have been imprisoned in a ghost infested castle and it's up to you to defeat the ghosts, manic springs, ghoulfish and mad monks which populate each of the four levels respectively. Lead the prisoners to safety and Scooby wins.

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DRINKING, PLAYING GAMES AND BEING NAUGHTY

Slurping pints of Old Flatulence Bitter in Ludlow hostelries is one of the main leisure activities enjoyed by the CRASH team — playing pub games at the same time is even more fun. The ALLIGATA people won't be demonstrating the finer points of swilling OF Bitter in Olympia, but they should have *Pub Games* on show. Seven games make up the the package, and we've had the chance to peek at three of them before Time was called. . . .

Darts-playing dynamos can take their place at the ALLIGATAoche for a game of 501. All you need to do is to position the cross over the board and fire. Easy? Not that simple in *Darts*! Cincinnati Kids can set up a *Poker* school, a game which requires a hard-headed attitude and nerves of steel. Why not stake your fortune on a bet? Or save a few shillings for a flutter on *Pontoon*. *The games we saw for ourselves were great fun — can't wait to get a Spectrum loaded in a PCW Show bar and test the rest!*

With luck, Vandal should also be on display — in it the player takes on the role of a naughty youth — no comparisons with a certain Naughty Nipper if you don't mind: work started on *Vandal* ages ago. The aim of the game is to collect points for being thoroughly bad, and evil activities available include lobbing bricks through windows, spraying names on walls and sitting on cats. Understandably, a fair bit of policeman-avoiding is included in the gameplay

FROM PRINTED PAGE TO SPECTRUM SCREEN

ADVENTURESOFT are continuing their liaison with those fantasy adventure book specialists, Ian Livingstone and Steve Jackson. *Temple of Terror* and *Sword of the Samurai* **are currently published in paperback by PUFFIN but should soon be gracing Spectrum screens.**

Temple of Terror **promises to be a game in which time will be of the essence. Raised in Darkwood Forest by wicked elves, the young Marlbordus is bent on conquering Allansia. To do this, however, he must find five Dragon artefacts. These are hidden deep within the Lost City of Vatos which lies somewhere in the Desert of Skulls. It's your task to get to those artefacts before the nefarious Marlbordus, and destroy them.**

If you like your fantasy to have a Japanese favour, sorry flavour, then *Sword of the Samurai* **should appeal. As the Shogun's young samurai champion, you are called upon to recover the great sword, his Dai-Katana, which has been stolen by Ikiru, the Master of Shadows. You must make your way to Onikaru, the Pit of Demons, where Ikiru and his ghostly warriors hang out . . .**

Breaking away from fighting fantasy, but still computerising the output of an established author, ADVENTURESOFT are currently programming *Kayleth*, **a slightly more futuristic game based on a work by Isaac Asimov. The scenario takes you to the planet Zyron and the gameplay requires you to frustrate Kayleth's plans for planetary domination. Being a greedy fellah, he has an uncontrollable craving for Chromazin — a precious mineral only found on Zyron. As a loyal Zyronian, you must do battle with Kayleth's minions and make your way to his inner sanctum for a final showdown that could secure a peaceful existence for you and all other Zyronians. . . .**

A NEW LABEL WITH BITE

A brand new label has just been spawned, and a quintet of games is under production for release into the murky waters of the software market.

MACMILLAN is the company behind the new venture, and PIRANHA is the name. Someone has obviously been listening to the Gnome of Newsfield with the plot for the forthcoming TV series, The Trap Door. Lurking beneath the trap door (read CRASH Towers' loft door) lives a bunch of slimies. At the very bottom of the castle lives Berk, the tireless minion of one of the Somebodies upstairs whose orders must be strictly obeyed. The idea is for Berk to complete all his tasks as quickly as possible.

In *Trapdoor* the game, the action revolves round the trap door which leads to even lower and more degrading levels of servility. Luckily, Berk is not without help. Boni, the friendly skull, can provide clues about what Berk should do next. Drut, keeps Berk's pecker up by bouncing merrily along.

The creatures that live under the trap door can also prove helpful to Berk as he goes about the myriad tasks he's been set. Letting out the wrong beastie leads to real trouble, however. Nothing can be completed until the awkward denizen of the dark has been returned to his proper place and the right little slimy released.

The tasks involve a lot of stomping about and pushing of objects from one place to another — the type of stuff that Newsfield Minions are familiar with. Catch the game, catch the TV series, catch the PIRANHA.

Fans of **2000AD** will be pleased to learn that *Rogue Trooper* should also be on display in Olympia. **The Wookie** of DESIGN DESIGN is currently working on this action-packed arcade adventure starring Rogue Trooper, Bagman, Gunnar and Helm. You are in command of Nu Earth's devastating weapon system and eternal war rages across the Ozart mountains and the Scum Sea. Track down the traitor and your three GI pals can be released from their their microchip prisons.

Nosferatu is a different game altogether. Based on the horror film, it's mostly about pains in the neck, the result of the nightly nibblings of a nasty vampire. This time a **Graham Stafford** game (also a DESIGN DESIGN designer.) The basic idea is to save your soul form the rather thirsty Dracula clone. To do this, he must be destroyed by being locked in an east-facing room — when the sun rises, nasty vampire doesn't'!

PIRANHA have also come up with something for the tourist in you. In *The Colour of Magic* you enter Discworld which is set on top of a giant turtle. Programmed by DELTA 4 and based on a book by **Terry Pritchett**, the game is something of a tourist's nightmare. Twoflower, the tourist, is taken round by the wizard Rincewind, who's not the most able courier in the cosmos. Matters are made worse by Twoflower's baggage which appears to have a life of its own. On their travels, just to make things worse, they encounter nice old Mr Death who is not (surprise surprise) very interested in their health.

Fifth in this list is a game from FIVE WAYS SOFTWARE who have made quite a reputation for themselves in the field of educational programs. They're putting the finishing touches to *Strike Force Cobra*, which is a far cry from the classroom! The world is being held to ransom by an evil genius who has taken leading computer scientists hostage, hacked into the defence computers of the world and taken control of the nuclear arsenals of several nations. As usual, world domination is the villain's aim, and thwarting his ambitions is what the game is all about.

A team of four crack assault troopers has been assembled and sent to the island HQ of the arch baddie — a maze of rooms and corridors in which the hostages are held. A central control computer has to be knocked out and a nine digit code is required to gain access to the inner sanctum where the computer is located.

Up to four people can join in, playing *Strike Force Cobra* together by selecting a single character and taking turns to move their soldier around the heavily guarded complex. The hooded heroes can jump, kick, dive forward, squat down, throw grenades and fire their machine guns.

Each level of the complex presents a puzzle in itself and the assault force can only move down a level once all the hostages on the current floor have been rescued, as each hostage holds a part of the vital security code.

SAS DRAGON IN NUCLEAR MICROCHIP HORROR!

Somerset software house DURELL certainly isn't short of Autumn releases. A game centred on a nuclear disaster — *Chain Reaction* — and a fiendish rogue program inside a computer — *Killer DOS* are still at an early stage, but may well be on view come September showtime. *Saboteur II*, the follow up arcade adventure, should appear in October and once again **Clive Townsend** is the man behind the code.

Second time around, a female plays the lead character: as the sister of Ninja, it's your task to revenge his death. The disk he stole in *Saboteur* has fallen into the hands of the murderous rebels. It contains vital information — the data required to control the dictator's missile silos.

First, there's the simple matter of flying in by hang-glider, then you have to fight and swim your way to where the missiles are kept, bomb the arsenal and escape on a motorbike. The game has over two hundred locations and is well-defended by brainy guard-dogs. Luckily, the guards are not so hot which means there's a chance of succeeding. Tiring stuff eh, gasp gasp. . . .

Mystical monsters star in another arcade adventure due from DURELL. A dragon is on the loose again — zoos just aren't what they used to be — in *Thanatos*, a game being written by **Mike Richardson**. The star of the show is a multi-talented and very athletic dragon called Thanatos (The Destroyer) who does everything but talk.

Not only can he walk, fly and breathe fire but he's also something of a Mark Spitz when it comes to swimming. Thanatos makes his way through the underworld in search of Eros (the life-giver). At some point he has to collect the lovely Enchantress who rides on his neck and is a very useful guide. Reaching a castle protected by knights with lances and foot-soldiers bearing longbows, the dragon's task and that of the maiden he is carrying is by no means a simple one. . . .

The screen features a new panoramic swirling action which reveals fantastic landscapes, castles, ships and mythical monsters. Mike's certainly not dragon his feet when it comes to writing games!

A member of the STRIKE FORCE COBRA team kicks down a door as a mobile security droid hovers in the background. Note how this particular 3D game is in colour . . .





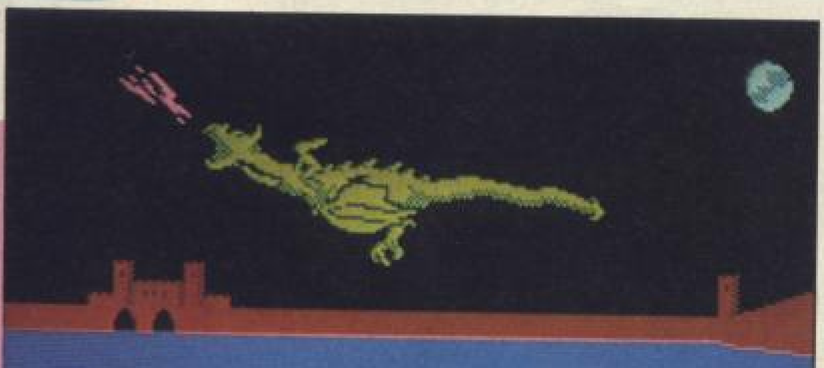
SWORD OF THE SAMURAI

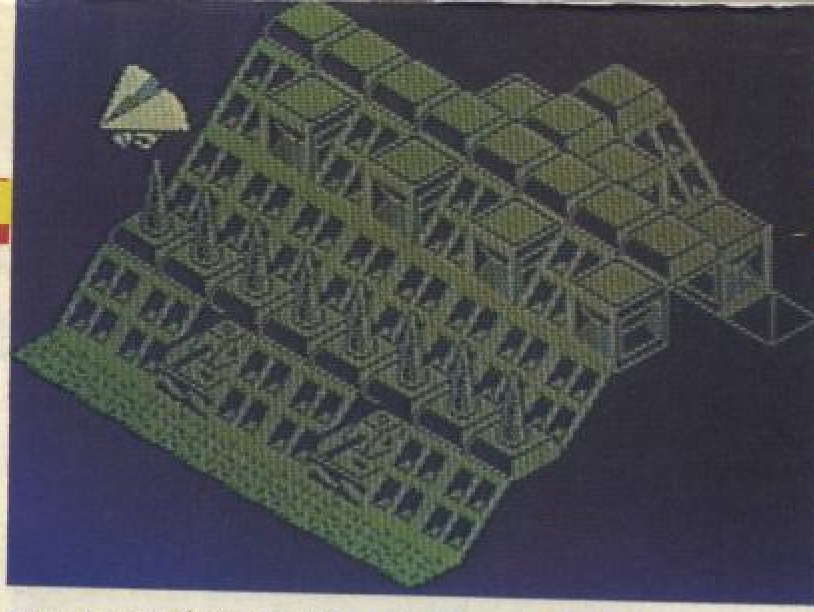


TEMPLE OF TERROR



KAYLETH





Flying low over hostile terrain — a strong nerve and a true eye is needed if those nuclear power plants are going to be taken out . . . Take to the air in GLIDER RIDER

THE CROP FROM THE ARGUS STABLE

Once again, ARGUS PRESS SOFTWARE won't actually be out there in the midst of the Show hurly-burly, preferring to treat journalists and other privileged beings to peaceful previews of their new products in a nearby hospitality suite.

ARGUS does the marketing work for A'n'F, and their new game is a spoof on the software distribution industry. In *Webstars*, a three part arcade game, you're put in charge of a warehouse shipping 'product', and have to contend with a variety of unpleasant occurrences including murderous machinery.

Star Wars, one of two games due under the QUICKSILVA label, feature the space defence system currently being debated in the media. It has been built and taken over by evil forces. The game is played with the Earth rotating in the background and is a *Missile Command* variant in which the player has to defend cities on the Home Planet.

Glider Rider is the other QUICKSILVA game about to be launched. Your mission is to penetrate the defences of the Abraxas Corporation whose headquarters are on Eos. They're specialists in producing hi-tech military equipment. If this wasn't nasty enough, they're also supplying highly destructive weapons to terrorist organisations. Your job is to fly onto the island by hang-glider, low enough to beat the radar scanner.

Once over the island it's your task to bomb the reactors which supply power to the weapons factories; hand grenades are supplied specifically for that purpose. Once you've landed, the hang-glider transmogrifies itself into a motorbike so you can speed your way across the island. But this is no ordinary motorbike. Not only can it release bombs but somehow — the wonders of science — it can be transformed into a rucksack: there's even something in this game for the advanced back-packer! The island occupies several hundred Spectrum screens, so take care you don't get lost. . . .

This month, Sean should be looking at *Mission Omega* in FRONTLINE, but MINDGAMES have another brain-stretcher in the offing — *Timetrax*. The wargamesters LOTHLORIEN are also planning to supply Sean with more material for his column in the form of *Johnny Reb II*, the sequel to their early American Civil War game, and *Legions of Death* in which the player gets the chance to participate in Roman sea battles. A watery launch at PCW time is scheduled for the latter game.

CRAPS! No, nothing rude, but merely a hint, and just a hint, of what BUG-BYTE's *Miami Dice* is all about. Craps, apparently, is a big game in the States and is played for big stakes. In this simulation you can shoot crap all you want — but make sure you read the instruction manual first, otherwise you might not do the game justice . . .

Crap is a game involving four players and dice. In this version, speech bubbles flash onto the screen at appropriate points during play in keeping with the game's light humour, and as ever, the aim of the game is to Get Lucky!

PALATIAL PLANS

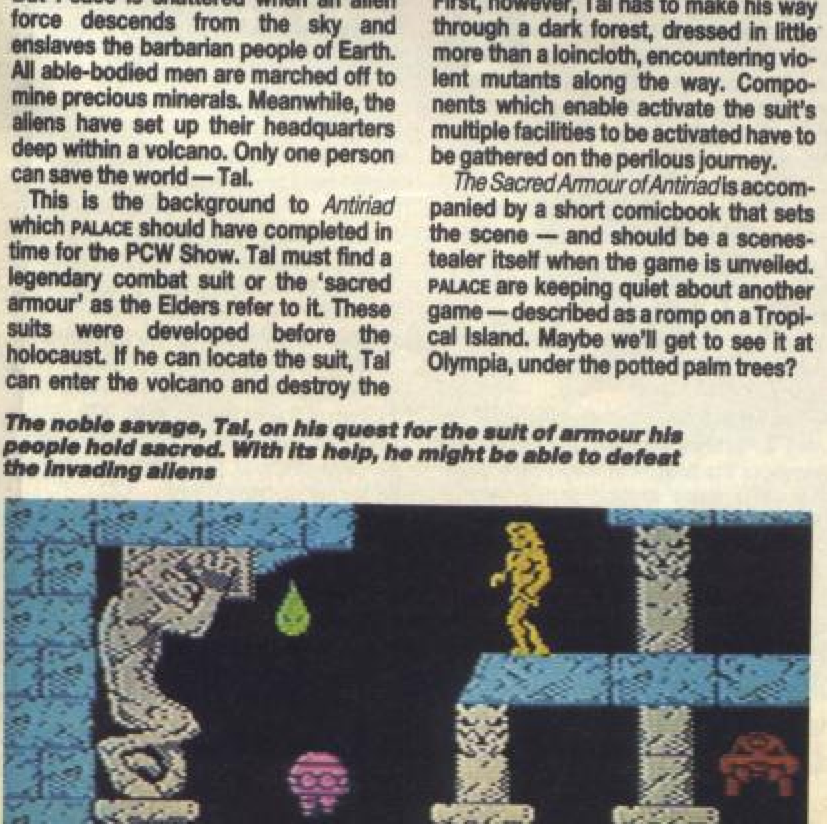
The year is 2086. A nuclear war has devastated civilisation — a nuclear winter approaches. Centuries pass and a new race emerges, their barbaric countenance belying their gentle nature. But Peace is shattered when an alien force descends from the sky and enslaves the barbarian people of Earth. All able-bodied men are marched off to mine precious minerals. Meanwhile, the aliens have set up their headquarters deep within a volcano. Only one person can save the world — Tal.

This is the background to *Antiriad* which PALACE should have completed in time for the PCW Show. Tal must find a legendary combat suit or the 'sacred armour' as the Elders refer to it. These suits were developed before the holocaust. If he can locate the suit, Tal can enter the volcano and destroy the aliens' radioactive generator.

There is nothing ordinary about this particular combat suit, the suit of *Antiriad*. It can protect the wearer against radiation and confers the power of flight. First, however, Tal has to make his way through a dark forest, dressed in little more than a loincloth, encountering violent mutants along the way. Components which enable activate the suit's multiple facilities to be activated have to be gathered on the perilous journey.

The Sacred Armour of Antiriad is accompanied by a short comicbook that sets the scene — and should be a scenestealer itself when the game is unveiled. PALACE are keeping quiet about another game — described as a romp on a Tropical Island. Maybe we'll get to see it at Olympia, under the potted palm trees?

The noble savage, Tal, on his quest for the suit of armour his people hold sacred. With its help, he might be able to defeat the invading aliens



COMING FROM THE EDGE

Remember Fairlight, one of last year's CRASH Smashes? Well here comes THE EDGE's follow up, Fairlight II: A Trail of Darkness, which continues the story. Having escaped from the castle, the reluctant hero Isvar inadvertently frees the evil wizard. In **Bo Jangeborg's** sequel, Isvar has to find the wicked wizard and destroy him. There are two sections to the game: one featuring the area immediately around the castle, depicting ruins and a forest; the other, more panoramic, showing mountains, a little bit of sea and another castle where the wizard lives.

There's more magic too, and additional nasties such as wolves, pirates and rampant foliage. The feminine interest will be provided by a heroine — once you've found her, you can switch from Isvar to his female counterpart, though both protagonists cannot be controlled simultaneously.

Mindstone, which we took a peek at last month is now finished (and set for a full review next month), and Psi CHESS is also booked to make an appearance at the PCW Show. THE EDGE are also getting into the arcade machine conversion market, with versions of the KONAMI classic, Shao Lin's Road underway. They also have plans for an adventure creating package which just might include Bo Jangeborg's graphics utility Grax used to create the scenery in Fairlight. Called Dreamscape, the adventure writing system is icon-driven and promises to be easy to use and relatively inexpensive. Keep an eye out for Palatron, too. . . .

OF HEROES AND BENDY DOOBRIES . . .



Boing, goes the bendy rubber doobrie as it wanders around the frozzly surroundings found in FROST BITE

Personal appearances by superstars who have endorsed Spectrum games are a regular feature of the PCW Show, but did you expect to see a teenage super-hero with a mechanical arm wandering about?

Ricky Steel, hero of MIKRO-GEN's latest game *Stainless Steel* (reviewed this issue), should be strolling round signing autographs. Two new games from the MIKRO-GEN team will also be on display at their stand.

SAS Strike Force puts you at the head of a band of rather different heroes — crack SAS troops — and you have to lead the soldiers through four simulations. The player selects equipment and the route to follow — mistakes can be costly so careful foresight is essential.

In the first simulation, a terrorist group has infiltrated a military research establishment, demanding the release of fellow terrorists. Your task is to root them out, causing as little damage as possible. Action in the second simulation centres on a secluded farmhouse which is believed to be a terrorist training centre. After surveillance, you must lead a raid on the building and capture the terrorists. The third scenario centres on an embassy which has been seized by . . . wait for it, wait for it . . . terrorists. Two people have been killed, six have been released and seven remain. Your task is to free the hostages ensuring, if possible, that no more of them are killed. The fourth simulation is something of a secret at the moment, so stay alert. . . .

The game which **Dave Perry** is working on, now that *Stainless* is complete, promises to be a chiller in which the idea is not to get eaten . . . further details on *Frost Bite* can be found lurking in our interview with Dave

TELECOMSOFT TREATS!

Liverpudlian software masters ODIN whose marketing is now taken care of by TELECOMSOFT, will be on the same stand as FIREBIRD and RAINBIRD. Last month we took a good look at *Heartland*, and next month *I.C.U.P.S.* is booked for a session under the CRASH reviewscope — sadly it arrived just after our deadline expired.

Appearing under ODIN's sister label, THOR, the game takes the form of a two part test of your abilities. *I.C.U.P.S.*, for all you ignoramuses out there, stands for the *International Commission for Universal Problem Solving*. Playing the part of a prospective special agent for this esteemed organisation, you are being tested to see how well you cope under stressful conditions.

The game begins in a space tunnel at the controls of an Interstellar Escort Ship, and a variety of alien craft, including torpedo bombers and pursuit ships are in the tunnel with you. The yellow nasties are deadliest. Collide with them and one of your four lives is lost. Other alien ships simply bump into the Interstellar Escort Ship hoping to enforce a fatal collision with the yellow wall on either side of the space tunnel. Blast your way through if you can . . .

The three sections which comprise the tunnel involve a straightforward shoot em up. The second test is much different. The scene changes to the inside of of an enemy starship. There are 64 screens in this section which form a complete map. On your travels expect to meet a set of weird and wonderful characters — a Jaw-Head, a Bolt-Head, and , believe it or not, a lethal rubber duck that thinks it's a kangaroo! At the end of the test, your overall performance and total score are given.

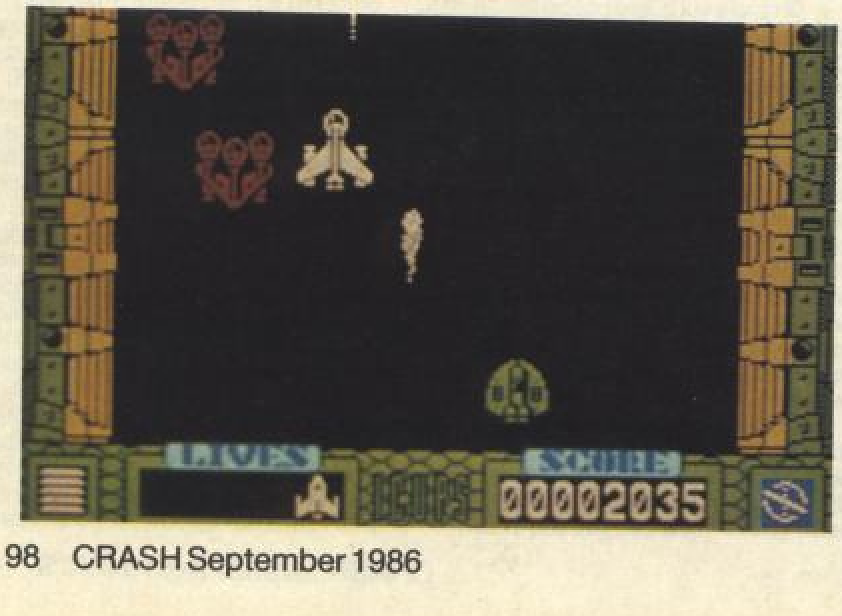
Another game from the Liverpool connection may well be on the stand — could it be *Hyperball*?

On the FIREBIRD front, a veritable plethora of product should be on display, including *The Hive*, a game with wire-frame graphics which pits the player against an evil swarm of alien insects — bees to be precise. The aim of this Gold Game is to penetrate the hive and kill off the Queen. The bees, of course, have a slightly different aim!

Another £9.95 Gold Game that should be on show is *Future Games*, a futuristic decathlon in which the player has to play an arcade sequence between each sub-game rather than move on automatically once a qualifying score has been achieved in an event. *Empire* (first seen in CRASH Towers before Christmas last year in an early incarnation) may make its debut at the show, along with *Druid*. An aura of secrecy surrounds most of FIREBIRD's plans, but one area of their activities which is no secret is the relaunch of the Silver Range and the creation of the Silver Club. If you're a member, don't forget to take your membership card along to the show — you can claim 25% off the price of any FIREBIRD game.

No doubt RAINBIRD will have a bit more news on their association with adventuremasters LEVEL 9 to release at the show, and a host of stunning programs on the Atari ST for you to marvel at. One day, there will be Spectrum versions of these games — a GALLERY artist showed the way last month!

Zooming along the tunnel full of nasties in I.C.U.P.S., the latest Spectrum release from the ODIN/THOR team



HIGH SPEED ACTION



Spot the attribute clash? No you can't, and this is a real screenshot taken on the office Spectrum. LIGHTFORCE from the new GARGOYLE GAMES label

Lasermation is here! Lasermation . . . lasermation . . . what's lasermation? Well, imagine yer fast and furious shoot em up without the attribute clashes. Impossible you might say — but you'd be wrong. FASTER THAN LIGHT, a new label from GARGOYLE making a debut at the Show, has made the impossible a reality. In *Lightforce*, to be released at the end of September, you'll be able to see exactly what Lasermation amounts to in a high quality shoot em up that is impressive to say the least. It really was a Spectrum that produced the effect illustrated here, honest!

Aliens have invaded a planetary system on the edge of the galaxy. The object of the game is to penetrate this planetary system, working your way through six levels: jungle, ice, desert, asteroid belt, factory complexes and climaxing, very likely, with a flight over the sun. On the way you encounter waves of unfriendly aliens.

The total lack of attribute clash is stunning to behold — especially when you consider the problems involved in moving alien ships independently over a landscape which scrolls downwards.

But what of FASTER THAN LIGHT itself? The idea of a new label was first broached at GARGOYLE in January, and the name arrived around March. Fast and original arcade games are planned for FTL, at the rate of five a year.

***Shockway Rider* is due after *Lightforce*. Set in the megacities of the twenty-first century, the game is rather different: as one of the street gang elite — a Shockway Rider — you must travel along the moving pathways which surround the city in an attempt to complete a full circle. Trying to prevent you are other street-wise riders, the cops and the vigilantes. There are also speed traps and rider ramps erected by the city's residents which must be avoided.**

Next January should see the release of *Samurai Dawn*, an arcade adventure set in the mysterious East. Lots of animated gore and the odd decapitation or fifty is scheduled for this one, which should please the more blood-thirsty amongst you. And of course, there's *George*, an executive type game involving lots of artificial intelligence techniques, aimed primarily at data-processing professionals (a whole new games market!) Although there might be a demo of this at the show, the 48k Spectrum can only give some flavour of what the game's about, as it is better suited to larger micro-computers.

The FTL stand is right behind the Newsfield stand up in the Gallery, so if you think we're fibbing about Lasermation, have a look for yourself and then come and say sorry to us for thinking we'd tell you porkies!


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INFOGRAMES UK

LE TATOU

THE ARMADILLO

ISSUE NUMBER 1



INFOGRAMES - FRENCH STYLE

ALL SOFTWARE users are curious as to what lies 'within the packaging' and what the company is like that produced it. Infogrames and its products will probably invoke the same curiosity, so here's some brief information.



Infogrames was created in June 1983 and at that time there was only two people, Bruno Bonnel and Christophe Sapet, two computers and a telephone! From those cottage industry days, Infogrames now employs over 90 people and is one of the leading companies in Europe, creating, producing and distributing top quality software.



ABOVE LEFT: Infogrames - French style, the office in Lyon, France.
RIGHT TOP: Christophe Sapet
RIGHT : Bruno Bonnell

THE ARMADILLO

ONE DAY in the future, children will learn the prehistory of the ZX 80 and its numerous, varied and short lived descendants.
'Why did they disappear?' the students ask. 'Lack of software' comes the reply.
Amongst all these, some will have survived, transformed of course, but rich in experience. In this world of the micro, they will be adapted in force. So that this would be our future, Infogrames adopted the ARMADILLO as their emblem, this lovely animal described in the Encyclopedia as a tank acting as a destroyer or even a submarine, indeed an animal at home in any terrain! He knows how to face up to disasters and how to defend himself against predators. We have coloured him to give him moral courage and his smile shows his pleasure at being made a member of our team.
Every month, he will tell you about us, our new products and tricks and gimmicks related to them. Furthermore, he is an insectivore, or to put it another way — he eats bugs.
Do not hesitate to question him.



ABOVE: David Crosweller
BELOW: Infogrames - UK

INFOGRAMES - UK

WITH A solid European base as support, the U.K. company will be run by David Crosweller. David has been behind many of the stories which you have read in your favourite magazines, having previously been involved solely with Publicity for a large number of companies.

It is his responsibility to bring you the best from France, and a sprinkling of innovative home produced software at a later date, for your total enjoyment.



AND WHY HERE ?

THE U.K. market is where it started. It was your enthusiasm that 'motivated' people around the world. Your software is so good that in France we had to produce software that was better. We had to find new themes, ideas and creations to match imported software. We know we have succeeded and in the future we will keep providing you with the very best.
And why here? Because we know you'll like our software.



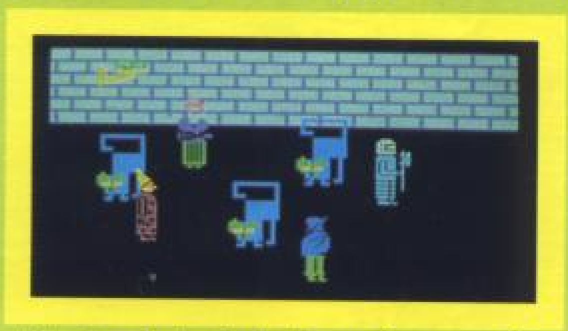
THE MAKING OF A LEGEND

THE MANDRAKE (mandragora officinarum) when pulled up emits a cry which can kill. Man has to find a subterfuge to obtain the root whilst remaining alive. This is why a person has tied a starving dog to it which pulls the chain, its efforts pull up the mandrake. The man puts his hands over his ears so as not to hear the cry.
Bibliotheque Nationale de Paris 1474.

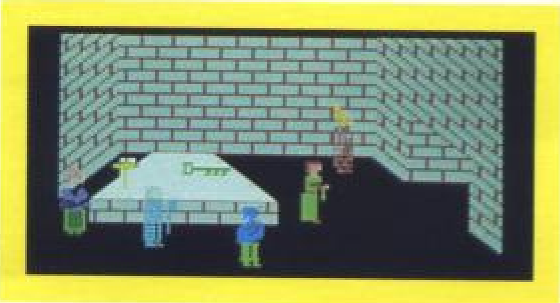
This legend has always been a source of fascination and wonder for me, so much so that when I found myself in front of one of these plants I could not resist pulling it. Then. . . I did not recover consciousness until nightfall. An old man with a kindly face was leaning over me and making me swallow a strange potion. When I asked 'Where am I?' (what a stupid question) he replied by recounting a story of his country called Mandragore.

'It all started under the reign of the much loved King Jorian the Fair, there wasn't one vassal who was not blindly devoted to him. Jorian had recently taken a wife in the person of the beautiful black-haired Corymande, princess of Sillanault, when one warm summer night sinister events were to take place which would plunge the kingdom into terror and misfortune.

A cloud of stars appeared in the sky, moved by a force which sped them towards the earth. Never had anyone seen such a rain of spinning stars. The population filled



with dread, locked themselves in their homes, only the king, queen and their attendants remained to watch the phenomenon from the castle's royal gardens. When the rain from space hit the ground, there was a cacophony of explosions, crackling and rumbling: trees caught fire, stones dropped out of the castle walls . . . The king called upon his attendants to take shelter but he himself was caught. He started to scream hideously and disappeared at the bottom of the garden in a shower of flames. By the early morning all



that was left of King Jorian was a tiny pile of cinders.

When the rain of spinning stars finished at dawn the next day, a demoniacal being revealed his presence within the castle grounds. Nobody could stand up to this demon. Combining magic with the brute force of his hideous claws, Yarod-Nor mercilessly massacred those who resisted him, survivors fled. However this maleficient creature cast a terrible spell over the country: enormous mountains completely encircled the rich and peaceful country, their disconcerting shadows covering a wide area. From this terrible day on, misery, hunger and epidemics spread through the country. . .

A prophecy was born in these troubled times, it spoke of a decagonal quest which would culminate in the chateau of Yarod-Nor. The ultimate key contained in the puzzles of the 10 chateau would help vanquish the monster. Many adventurers have tried to penetrate the mystery of the 10 chateaux, none have reached the end of the tests. Maybe you might. . .?



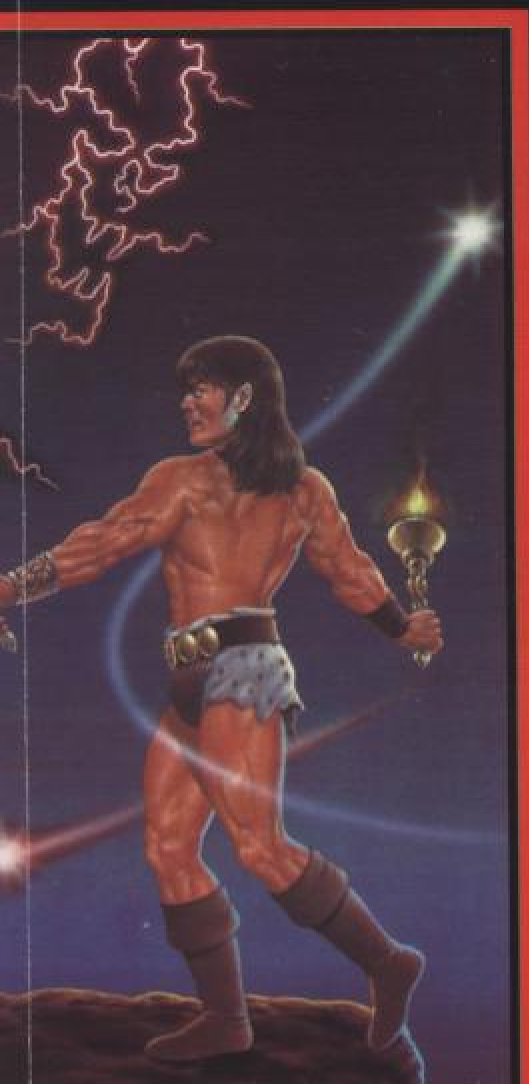
MANDRA

MANDRAGORE PLUNGES you back to t
attempt to regain peace in a fabulous country
prince of evil. Your team is made up of four b
kind (dwarf, elf, half orc, human, hobbit) an
intelligence, power, magic, cunning. . .). To
you must visit 10 chateaux (which almost 3
puzzles. A superb creation which is complet
The software was ranked by French journalis
games.



AGORE

back to the fantastic Middle Ages for the
country under the tyranny of Yarod-Nor,
of four beings and you must choose which
obbit) and what characteristics (strength,
. . .). To reach the kingdom of Yarod-Nor
almost 30 rooms each), to solve the ten
s completed by this map of the kingdom.
journalists as the best of the role playing





A SHOCK FORCE FOR A HOLY GRAIL

IF WE were to talk about the creators without whom this wonderful role playing game would never have existed, to take them out of the shadows and examine them in the fleeting space of an article, we could never do them justice, but we will try.

MANDRAGORE was created by a team of 7 people: Marc, Johan, Agnes, Anna, Christian, Marie Christine and Josiane.

In 1983 **MARC CECCHI** finished Mandragore on paper. It looked good but did'nt really amount to much! So he approached a leading publishing company in the French market, INFOGRAMES. Marc was no longer on his own, the team head been formed.

Marc heads the team in his capacity as scenario creator, his ultimate quest: to reach Chateau no.10 (key to the puzzle). By his side a 16 year old joker, fanatical about micro processing, **YOHAN ELHADAD,** creates the graphics for the chateaux and rooms (10 chateaux each having nearly 30 rooms, enough to get lost). Height of luxury for the initiated, he even devised a chateau himself: **THE LABYRINTH CHATEAU** (my advice: get yourself a compass, the being is devious).

As far as visual pleasure is concerned, **AGNES BELMUDES,** 26 years old, has produced 500 designs, a record, she had an MA in the History of Art under her belt, and a good sense of humour combined with creativity (and you certainly need some ideas to create all these monsters and objects).

Once the prehistoric bip bips have finished, **ANNA ELHADAD** adapted a Bach sonata for flute and harpsichord on the micro for melomaniacs. What pleasure to the ears.

Mad about literature (although in a scientific field, kinesitherapy), **CHRISTIAN BALLANDRAS** stimulated by Marc's game decides to describe the wonderful world of MANDRAGORE in the **EXPLOITS OF SYRELLA** for fans of mythology.

The graphic artists, **MARIE CHRISTINE GALLAVARDIN** and **JOSIANE GIRARD** were inspired by it to illustrate the cassette.

A team effort? Yes and successful what's more!

ZODIAC, YOU WILL FIND THE MASTER SIGN

THIS COULD be how the mystery of the zodiac chateau could be summed up, but that may seem to you to be too obscure a clue! Site of action: The forest of destiny. A green sea in which a fabulous castle stands, inhabited by creatures foreign to our world and formerly governed by the controllers of destiny (the master sign), henceforth taken over by the servants of the Demon in an obscure corner of the chateau. Any visitor would be very worried as he would meet many monsters some of which are harmless but the others are servants of the Maleficient Power.

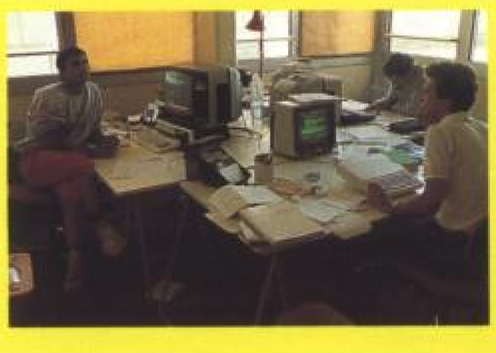
The Protagonists: Syrella, the gentle lady; Gelth the magician; Torlinn the brute; Podus the dwarf; and also, let's be frank, our meagre brain which is, however, made use of.

The aim: the master sign must be returned to its original place to restore former order.

How: By calling on your powers of deduction. I am not able to reveal the solution, but I can at least help you! The essential object for solving this puzzle can be summed up as follows: the first syllable represents a fabric of the time, the whole thing gives the name of an essential object which when removed, will reveal the master sign.

A piece of advice: I have often wondered how you can tell the good from the evil with these bizarre beings. To know exactly what to do, read the bestiary carefully! I'm going to shut up now or I'll give away the secret. So is that it, have you solved the puzzle? No? keep 'zodiacking', you're getting warmer.





PREVIEW

ADVENTURE, ACTION, stimulation, reflection, help with diagnostics. . . all these are already awaiting you in INFOGRAMES software. So here is a preview of the software and software packages which are going to be launched soon. No need to wait years, they will be available from July and the second wave is already on its way. . .

L'AFFAIRE VERA CRUZ

(POLICE INVESTIGATION)

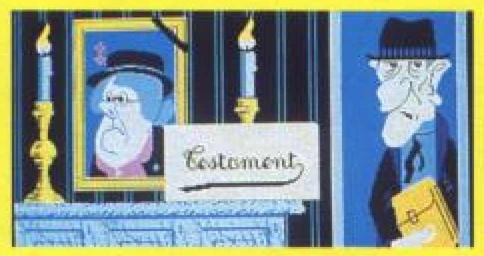


THE CRIME SERIES
Murder or suicide?'
IN CHARGE of the investigation, you have to solve this baffling case. The realism of the enquiry and the quality of the graphics will leave you flabbergasted. Traditional investigation methods and the DIAMOND network are at your disposal.

(AUGUST)

THE INHERITANCE:

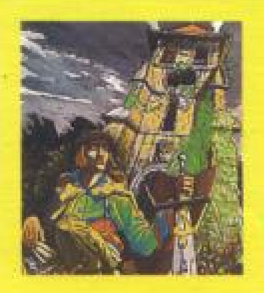
PANIC AT LAS VAGAS



(ARCADE/ADVENTURE)

AN INCREDIBLE adventure which takes you to Las Vegas in a race against time. Why are you running? Money of course! A fabulous inheritance which is yours on one condition: to win one million dollars in one night. Danger stalks you at every turn: creditors, paid killers . . . they are all after you. The adventure starts as soon as you try to leave your flat and it continues en route to the airport, let alone in Las Vegas itself . . . An adventure game with many twists and turns.

(SEPTEMBER)



THE QUEST OF ARTILAC

(ADVENTURE)

AN UNPARALLELLED SCENARIO (200k)

An extraordinary adventure where magic exists alongside the ordinary and the extraordinary. Imagination is at stake as neither brute force nor occult power can thwart all the wiles of the scenario. The illustrations are unrivalled. A booklet helps you to unravel the puzzles.

(NOVEMBER)

THE EXPERT

(ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

THE EXPERT is an expert system or an artificial intelligence system which, by using Knowledge and reasoning processes, helps the user to solve the complex problems normally requiring a human expert.

The EXPERT is made up of two modules : a knowledge acquisition module and a knowledge use module.

(JULY)

ILLUSIONS

(ARCADE)

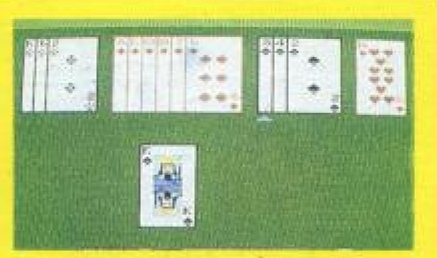
CUNNING AND FORCE IN 3 DIMENSIONS. . .

Lovely little animals, the Speeps would like to join together but how can they do it? The more they move together the more the lizards pursue them. Their Achilles heel is water. Will the Speeps discover the secret of the Magical mirror, in time to save their life? Two parts: one where your skill will be necessary and the other where cunning and force will combine. A subtle mixture.

(AUGUST)

BRIDGE

(SIMULATION)



(SEPTEMBER)

THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL SIMULATION

BRIDGE INTEGRATES the 7 conventions officially recognised by the majority of players/gamblers: MAJEUR 5th STAYMAN, BLACKWOOD, GERBER, 1 SANS ATOUT A 11–12 POINTS. I SANS ATOUT FAIBLE, JACOBY, 2 TREFLES FORT.

MURDERS ON THE ATLANTIC

(ADVENTURE)

A DOSSIER OF A DRAMA ON THE HIGH SEAS
THE CRIME SERIES

MURDERS MOUNT up during an Atlantic crossing. You have to discover who has comitted them and why. A spy story with repercussions going back as far as the 2nd World War. 10 suspects to question, a dossier containing all kinds of evidence (cartridge cases, cash, hair, ink, letters and newspaper cuttings) and many rooms. It will be an arduous task!! **(SEPTEMBER)**

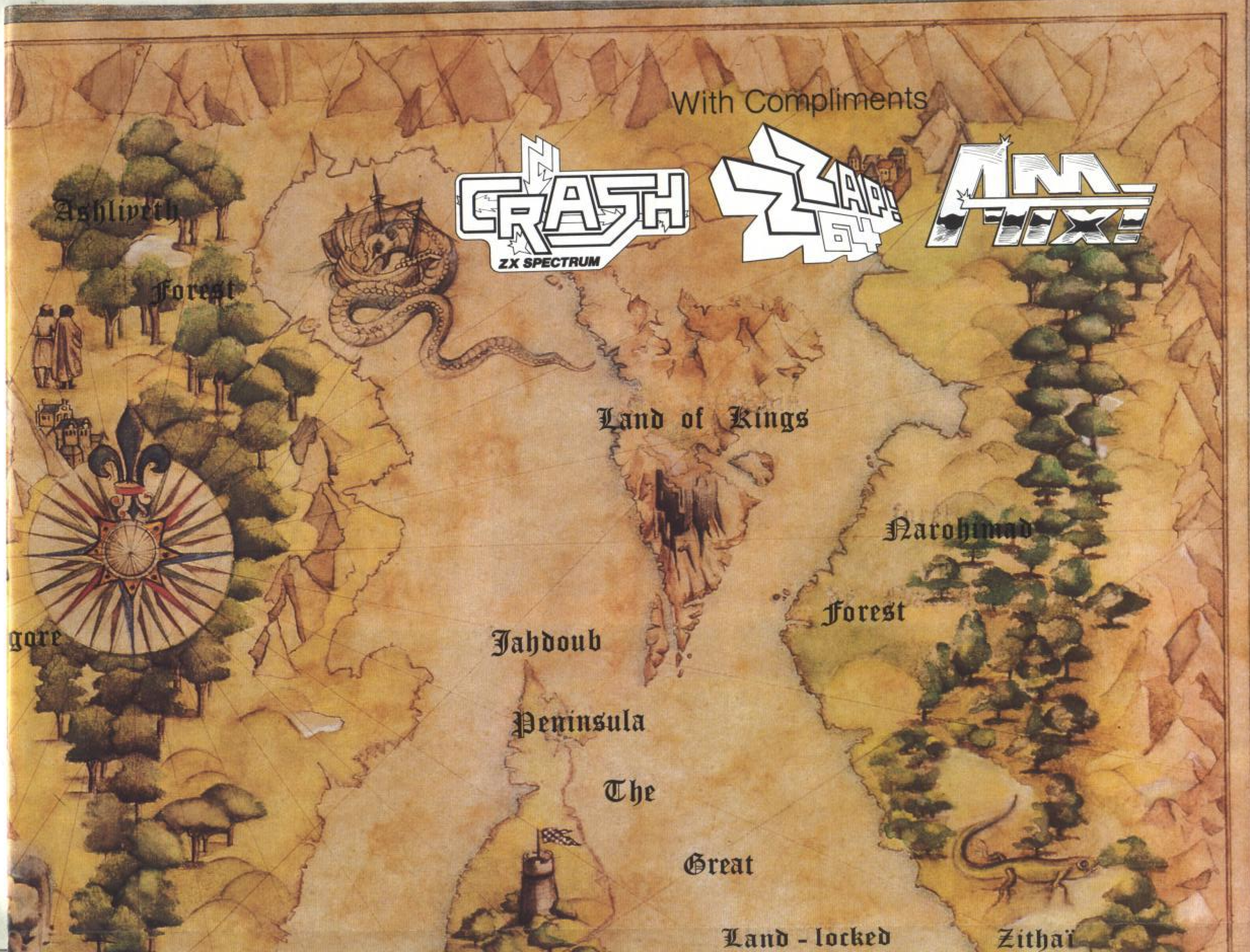


ALL THIS software will be available on MSX, C64, C128, AMSTRAD, SPECTRUM, and the EXPERT software package on ATARI ST, AMSTRAD, MACINTOSH, APPLE II, IIe, IBM and compatibles.

INFOGRAMES UK Mitre House, Abbey Road, ENFIELD, Middx. EN1 2RQ


Land
of
Rohnkreld
Varax Forest
The Smokey
Mountains
Ozgarath
Lake
The
Spine
of
Mandrag
Girdle
of
Rainy Mountains
The Inulirg Frontier
Mount


The Inuliry Frontier
Forest of Destiny
Roak
The Small Land-locked Sea
Skarg Forest


With Compliments
CRASH ZX SPECTRUM
ZZAP! 64
AMTIX!
Ashliveth
Forest
gore
Land of Kings
Narohimad
Forest
Jahdoub
Peninsula
The
Great
Land - locked
Zithaï



landragore

Infogrames